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JOHN GALSWORTHY

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EXILED

THE WORKS OF
JOHN GALSWORTHY

NOVELS

VILLA RUBEIN: AND OTHER STORIES
THE ISLAND PHARISEES
THE MAN OF PROPERTY
THE COUNTRY HOUSE
FRATERNITY
THE PATRICIAN
THE DARK FLOWER
THE FREELANDS
BEYOND
FIVE TALES
SAINTS' PROGRESS
IN CHANCERY
TO LET
THE WHITE MONKEY
THE SILVER SPOON
SWAN SONG
THE FORSYTE SAGA
CARAVAN

STORIES AND STUDIES

A COMMENTARY
A MOTLEY
THE INN OF TRANQUILLITY
THE LITTLE MAN
A SHEAF
ANOTHER SHEAF
TATTERDEMALION
CAPTURES
CASTLES IN SPAIN

POEMS

MOODS, SONGS AND DOGGERELS
VERSES NEW AND OLD

MEMORIES (ILLUSTRATED)
AWAKENING (ILLUSTRATED)

PLAYS

FIRST SERIES :	THE SILVER BOX
	JOY
	STRIFE
SECOND SERIES :	THE ELDEST SON
	THE LITTLE DREAM
	JUSTICE
THIRD SERIES :	THE FUGITIVE
	THE PIGEON
	THE MOB
FOURTH SERIES :	A BIT O' LOVE
	FOUNDATIONS
	THE SKIN GAME
FIFTH SERIES :	A FAMILY MAN
	LOYALTIES
	WINDOWS
SIXTH SERIES :	THE FOREST
	OLD ENGLISH
	THE SHOW
SIX SHORT PLAYS :	THE FIRST AND THE LAST
	THE LITTLE MAN
	HALL-MARKED
	DEFEAT
	THE SUN
	PUNCH AND GO

ESCAPE

EXILED

AN EVOLUTIONARY COMEDY
IN THREE ACTS

BY

JOHN GALSWORTHY

DUCKWORTH
3 HENRIETTA STREET, LONDON, W.C.2

All applications respecting amateur performances of John Galsworthy's plays must be made to
THE SECRETARY
INCORPORATED SOCIETY OF AUTHORS
11 GOWER STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

All other applications to the Author's Agents
MESSRS CURTIS BROWN LIMITED
6 HENRIETTA STREET
COVENT GARDEN, LONDON
AND 116 WEST 44TH STREET
NEW YORK, U.S.A.

First Published 1929

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Made and Printed in Great Britain
by Turnbull & Spears, Edinburgh

CHARACTERS

Sir Charles Denbury	A Twelfth Baronet
Sir John Mazer	A King of Industry
Joan Mazer	His Daughter
Miss Card	His Secretary
Mr East	A Photographer
Haddon	An Innkeeper
George	His Barman
A Commercial Traveller	On his Round
A Journalist	Coasting for Views
Mo Bender, Jo Todd	Bookmakers
Foster	A Head Groom
Gossett	A Chauffeur
Tebbutt, Tulley, Hodgkin, Gascoyne, Clarke, Mitchell, Richard Tulley, Goffer, Three Others	Miners out of Work
A Tramp	On the Roads
A Woman	On the Streets

CAST OF THE ORIGINAL PRODUCTION UNDER MR LEON M. LION'S MANAGEMENT AT WYNDHAM'S THEATRE, LONDON JUNE 19TH, 1929

SIR CHARLES DENBURY	Lewis Casson
SIR JOHN MAZER	Edmund Gwenn
JOAN MAZER	Jean Shepeard
MISS CARD	Mabel Russell
MR EAST	J. H. Roberts
HADDON	Arthur Grenville
GEORGE	Douglas Jeffries
A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER	Roger Maxwell
A JOURNALIST	Michael Shepley
MO BENDER	Aubrey Dexter
JO TODD	Pete Warren
FOSTER	Julian Andrews
GOSSETT	Victor Hilton
TEBBUTT	Sydney Benson
TULLEY	D. J. Williams
HODGKIN	Edward Irwin
GASCOYNE	Ernest Ruston
CLARKE	Granville Ferrier
MITCHELL	Jack Minster
RICHARD TULLEY	Campbell Logan
GOFFER	Ronald Kerr
A TRAMP	Brember Wills
A WOMAN	Una O'Connor

The Play Produced by LEON M. LION

SCENE

ACT I.

The Billiard-room of "The Rose and Nettle" at Bableigh : 10.30 *a.m.*

ACT II.

Sir John Mazer's *Study at Luxford Hall near-by :* 11.30 *a.m.*

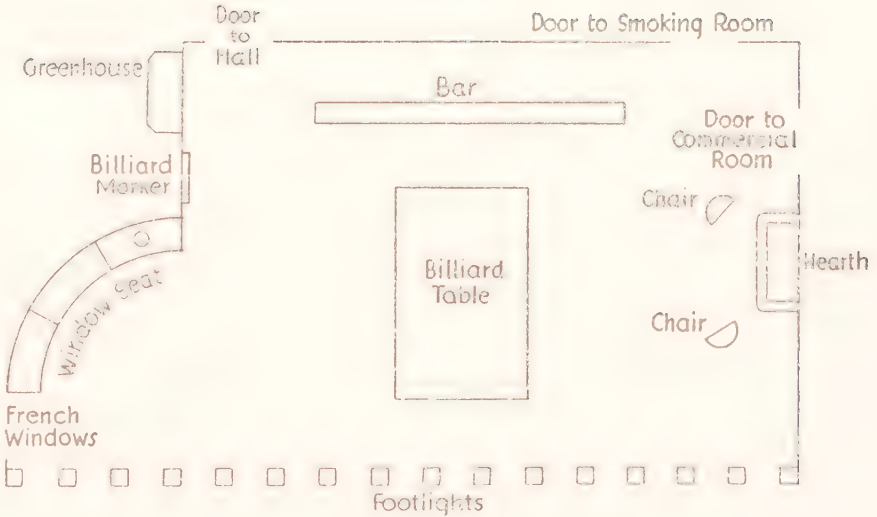
ACT III.

SCENE I. The Billiard-room of "The Rose and Nettle". 12.15 *p.m.*

SCENE II. The same : 10 *p.m.*

Time *is the present : and action is practically continuous but for a lapse of nine hours between the scenes of Act III.*

ACT I


Door to Hall
Door to Smoking Room
Greenhouse
Bar
Billiard Marker
Door to Commercial Room
Chair
Billiard Table
Hearth
Window seat
Chair
French Windows
Footlights

ACT I

The billiard-room (at the back of which is the slightly-raised bar) of the "Rose and Nettle" Inn at Bableigh, near Nunchester. The clock points to ten-thirty on the day of the Nunchester Cup. The centre of the stage is occupied by a small billiard-table, end on to the footlights. Stage Left is a fireplace burning logs, though it is early May. There are arm-chairs above and below it, and a door leads off behind the arm-chair above into the commercial room. The other side of the room is right-angled by a bay-windowed excrescence (see Plan), at the lower left-hand corner of which is a French window opening on to the hotel garden. The bar of the Inn extends along the whole of the back wall, except for a door, Right, into the hall, and a door, Left, into the smoking-room. So far as the room of an inn with a bar and a billiard-table in it can have a look of refinement, this room has —the INNKEEPER *having once served in a good old family.*

Just now he is standing behind the bar, personable—say seventy—a brown-eyed old John Bull, watching his BARMAN *mixing sherry and bitters for an obvious* COM-

MERCIAL TRAVELLER, *and an unobvious young man, who is in fact a* JOURNALIST.

C. TRAV. Flyin' Kite. 'Ow'd yer spell it ?

BARMAN. K.I.T.E.

C. TRAV. Ow ! The gell's nyme ?

BARMAN. No. K.*I*.T.E.

C. TRAV. Ow ! Not with an i—with an *i*. I see. Flyin' Kite. Good nyme for a ryce-'orse—with their 'abit of fallin' down.

INNKEEPER. Sir Charles never gave an 'orse a bad name.

C. TRAV. What Sir Charles is that, Mr Innkeeper?

INNKEEPER. Sir Charles Denbury.

C. TRAV. One o' these new knights ?

INNKEEPER. [*With a sniff*] Twelfth baronet.

C. TRAV. A Barronight ? I see. So she's the goods for the Nunchester Cup.

BARMAN. Ah ! they've tried 'er a cert.

C. TRAV. That's not promisin'.

INNKEEPER. Sir Charles never was one to keep a good thing dark.

C. TRAV. Aw ! Then he's seen better days, I s'pose ?

INNKEEPER. He used to own the land here and the coal under it.

C. TRAV. Pore feller ! I'd like to see 'im. A man that's goin' bankrupt 'as a peculiar look—too bright.

INNKEEPER. When I was coachman at Luxford Hall in Sir Charles's grandfather's day, coal and land were property ; now you can't get 'em taken off your hands. D'ye think I can make my farm pay ?

It's a hobby, that's all it is. Sir Charles has had to sell the house he was brought up in.

C. TRAV. To an American ? Bit gallin'.

INNKEEPER. No. To Sir John Mazer.

C. TRAV. Ow ! One of our kings of industry.

INNKEEPER. Head of the Mazer Company that closed the pits here.

JOURNALIST. Has the last pit been closed long ?

INNKEEPER. Six months.

JOURNALIST. How about the miners ?

INNKEEPER. [*Shaking his head*] Sad times here in Babbeigh. Men that have been at it all their lives, and their fathers before them. Sad times.

JOURNALIST. Sir Charles is staying here, isn't he ? D'you know where he is just now ?

INNKEEPER. Are you connected with the Press ?

JOURNALIST. [*Smiling*] That is my weakness.

INNKEEPER. Then I don't.

JOURNALIST. But I've been told to get his views.

C. TRAV. Never 'ave a view, you only 'ave to change 'em. Every season I travel a new fashion, and tell people why they gotta take the exact opposite of what I told 'em last season was perfection.

While he speaks a gentle-looking person has entered from the French window, Right. He has a pocket camera, which he deposits on the bar.

INNKEEPER. Well, Mr East ?

MR EAST. [*In a peculiarly soft and apologetic voice, which struggles with his r's*] I'm so sorry, but have you a clinical thermometer ?

INNKEEPER. What d'you want it for ?

MR EAST. My dog. His eyes are very yellow. I should like to take his temperature.

INNKEEPER. Is he bad ?

MR EAST. I'm afraid so.

INNKEEPER. I'll get one.

He goes out to the commercial room.

JOURNALIST. What breed of dog, Sir ?

MR EAST. A near-poodle ?

BARMAN. If he's got jaundice you won't save 'im.

MR EAST. I shall try my best. He's an old friend.

JOURNALIST. Where is he ?

MR EAST. I have him in a little greenhouse outside here.

INNKEEPER. [*Re-entering with thermometer*] Here we are, Mr East. I'll come with you.

MR EAST. Thank you so much.

They go out through the French window, and can be seen through the window entering a greenhouse.

C. TRAV. [*Inspecting camera*] I got the facsimiliar o' that at home.

BARMAN. Here, you got it wrong—facsimile.

C. TRAV. Nao ! Think I can't speak me own language ! So photography's 'is 'obby ? Never 'ad an 'obby meself, too fatiguin'. [*To the* BARMAN] Another little drink for me, Sonny.

The BARMAN *mixes another sherry and bitters.*

BARMAN. He's a professional photographer is Mr East.

C. TRAV. Seems fond of animals.

JOURNALIST. Curious how much fonder of animals we English are than any other people!

C. TRAV. Ah! It's a bad sign. [*Taking cue*] Shall we play fifty up?

JOURNALIST. Right. [*Taking cue*] Why bad?

C. TRAV. Soppy. But I like to see the 'Umanitarians set about each other. An Antivivisectionist and a doctor. You can't 'ave better sport than that.

JOURNALIST. You wouldn't call a doctor humanitarian, would you?

C. TRAV. Well, he's supposed to 'ave a leanin' that way. [*Stringing out of baulk*] What about this coal crisis?

JOURNALIST. [*Chalking his cue*] The British coal age is passing.

C. TRAV. Why! I read the other day we got enough coal to last five 'undred years, includin' bank 'olidays. [*Plays.*]

JOURNALIST. Lots of coal and no profit on it. Evolution——

C. TRAV. [*To the* BARMAN] Are you going to mark, Job?

BARMAN. [*Drily*] My name's George.

C. TRAV. My mistake. But what a pytient life—a barman's! Mixin' drinks for other fellers. [*He plays.*]

The BARMAN *comes from behind the bar, takes the rest and stands by the marking-board on the wall, stage Right.*

What are you goin' to ask Sir Charles if 'e comes in?

JOURNALIST. [*Playing*] What more can be done for the miners.

C. TRAV. Well! if your paper's Conservative, he'll say: Nothing. If it's Liberal, he'll say: Everything. And if it's Labour, he'll say: Go to it. My turn! I'll trouble you in a minute, Job.

JOURNALIST. [*To* BARMAN] What sort of man is Sir Charles?

BARMAN. Gentleman.

C. TRAV. The word's gone out. Try again!

BARMAN. [*Sulkily*] Well, he's just come back from Africa—photographin' live lions in a state of nature.

C. TRAV. Wow! Is there any money in that?

As he speaks the door from the hall is opened, and a quiet, unassuming man of middle age and height, in a tweed suit and a soft hat, comes in. He has a very brown, wrinkled face, and humorous mouth. He takes his hat off to the company at large, nods to the BARMAN, *and crossing to the fireplace, sits down in an arm-chair, saying: "Lemon juice, please, George."*

BARMAN. Right-o, Sir Charles.

The COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER, *after finishing the stroke he is engaged on, winks at the* JOURNALIST *and jerks his thumb towards* SIR CHARLES, *who is filling a pipe.*

C. TRAV. Go in and win.

The JOURNALIST *leans his cue against the table and goes up to* SIR CHARLES.

JOURNALIST. Sir Charles Denbury? Would you

be frightfully kind, Sir, and give my paper your view of the coal situation here ?

SIR CHARLES. [*With a twinkle*] My view ! It's unprintable.

JOURNALIST. Of course, Sir ; but—er—could you tell me what you'd do about it if you were the country ?

The BARMAN *brings the decoction.*

SIR CHARLES. Thank you, George. [*Drinking it off*] I'd rather tell you what will win the Cup. Flying Kite. D'you mind if I go and send a wire ?

He slips from his chair and goes out into the smoking-room.

C. TRAV. [*With a chuckle*] No flies on Sir Charles. [*Gaggling*] What you goin' to make him say in your article ?

MR EAST *has entered from the French window and goes towards the bar.*

MR EAST. [*To the* BARMAN] Could you give me a cheese sandwich, and a glass of stout ?

JOURNALIST. Dog better ?

MR EAST. He doesn't seem to be in pain. I have sent for the Vet.

C. TRAV. 'Ow's things in the photographin' line, Sir ?

MR EAST. Fairly constant if I may say so.

C. TRAV. Ah ! It's like drink. Any 'uman weakness gives very steady results.

MR EAST *picks up his camera, receives the sandwich and glass of stout, and takes them towards the window.*

Well, I must go and get my bag and be off. Finish our game some time.

He goes out into the commercial room.

JOURNALIST. D'you know this part well ?

MR EAST. [*Sitting at the window*] I am a native of Nunchester.

JOURNALIST. Pretty country round.

MR EAST. Beautiful.

JOURNALIST. See anything of the miners ?

MR EAST. I have taken portraits of some. [*He nibbles.*]

JOURNALIST. I want to find out their view of the situation.

MR EAST. Their view is very simple.

JOURNALIST. How ?

MR EAST. [*Very softly*] Just bloody hell.

JOURNALIST. You've heard them ?

MR EAST. Frequently.

JOURNALIST. I don't wonder. D'you know Sir Charles Denbury ?

MR EAST. I have that privilege.

JOURNALIST. He seems to be left high and dry, too.

MR EAST. Yes. He has no royalties now, and no land. His view is very similar.

JOURNALIST. Alas ! My editor is too sensitive for simple Anglo-Saxon statements.

MR EAST. I recently photographed an editor who spoke very vigorously about his own face. I sometimes think with Shakespeare : " The face is out of drawing, O cursed spite that ever I was born to set it right ! "

JOURNALIST. Are you backing Sir Charles's horse?

MR EAST. I shall have my little bit on. May I ask if you believe in the Tote? When a bookmaker gave me *his* views the other day, his face became an outsize.

JOURNALIST. And his views, too?

MR EAST. Yes. People are very frank in the photographer's room. A kind of desperation, I think.

JOURNALIST. Well, Mr East, I must go and worry Sir Charles again.

TWO MEN *have entered from the hall and gone up to the bar. One is short and stout and one is tall and lean; both are weathered, but more from whisky than from water.*

BARMAN. [*To the stout* MAN] What's yours, Mr Bender? Sherry? Ditto, Mr Todd?

BENDER. This Flyin' Kite—any money goin'? We're still layin' eights.

MR EAST. [*From the window*] Might I have a sovereign on, each way?

BENDER. Certainly, Mr East. Jo, Mr East quid each way, eights and twos.

JOURNALIST. [*To* MR TODD] You might book me the same.

TODD. [*Jerking chin at* BENDER] Gent 'ere, Mo.

BENDER. Eights and twos. Book it, Jo.

TODD *takes name and money from* JOURNALIST. Now Sir Charles is back in England. I want an 'eart-to-'eart talk with 'im about this Tote. Someone's got to say a word for the poor bookmaker.

JOURNALIST. [*Pricking ears*] You're definitely averse?

BENDER. [*His face a study*] Averse! The English language isn't up to what I think.

JOURNALIST. Oh! have a shot. It's a rich tongue.

BENDER. 'Ard-workin' lot o' men and the bread taken out of their mouths by a bloomin' machine.

TODD. What's *your* complaint?

JOURNALIST. [*A little startled*] Journalism. Oh! I see! Sherry and bitters, please. [*To* BENDER] Will you have one? Do tell me, what will happen to the bookmakers ruined by the Tote? [*He puts down a coin for* BENDER'S *drink.*]

BENDER. What do you say, Jo? Gentleman wants to know what'll 'appen to us.

TODD. We'll just get outed. There'll be no National Fund got up for us.

JOURNALIST. Exactly! What price Evolution?

BENDER. Sir John Mazer's 'orse? 'E's favourite. D'you want to back it?

JOURNALIST. [*Laughing*] No, no! Excuse me—I I've got a fish to land. [*He goes into the smoking-room.*]

BENDER. [*Taking his sherry and bitters*] Thank 'ee, George! Did you read that about beer? Consumption goin' down all the time. And now you've got free tea to contend with. What a state o' things.

BARMAN. [*Deeply*] Ah!

BENDER. George, could you get me a word with Sir Charles? Won't keep 'im five minutes, but it's important.

BARMAN. I'll see. [*He goes into the smoking-room.*]

BENDER. *You've* got the only soft job left, Mr East. They'll never stop people bein' photographed by Act o' Parlyment. *You* know my views on this Tote.

MR EAST. Yes: when you gave them to me the other day you broke a little blood-vessel.

BENDER. Ah! My nose bled, and no wonder. They'll run 'orses by machinery next: they'll 'ave waxwork jocks; shouldn't be surprised if they 'ave india-rubber grass. There's no 'uman nature left in anything. [*He grimaces.*]

MR EAST. Except the face.

SIR CHARLES *comes in from the smoking-room.*

SIR CHARLES. What is it, Bender?

BENDER. This Tote, Sir Charles—you know us.

SIR CHARLES. Undoubtedly.

BENDER. Well, can't you say a word for us? Don't we give fair odds? Aren't we an honest lot—take us all round? Don't we work 'ard in all weathers?

SIR CHARLES. Quite.

BENDER. A blinkin' machine. This Tote don't get rheumatism; it's got no lungs, and it's got no guts. Times are 'ard for you too, Sir Charles. You ought to feel for us. If this Tote comes in, a lot of us'll be squeezed out.

SIR CHARLES. Don't you worry, Bender, you'll find a way round. But your custom among the miners looks dicky, poor devils!

BENDER. [*Sententiously*] Ah! it's a bad day for old England when the miner can't afford to have 'is bob on.

SIR CHARLES. Are they backing my mare? I should like to do them a turn.

BENDER *looks somewhat stealthily round the room, and seeing that* GEORGE *the barman is going out to the commercial room with some glasses, comes a step closer to* SIR CHARLES.

BENDER. [*Beckoning to* TODD] Come 'ere, Jo.

TODD *approaches.*

This Sir John Mazer that owns the favourite.

SIR CHARLES. What about him?

BENDER. Well! They were sayin' in the "Red Lion" last night that 'e sticks at nothin'.

SIR CHARLES. [*With a laugh*] The miners? They would. He closed the pits here, you know.

BENDER. Has your mare started for Nunchester, Sir Charles?

SIR CHARLES. [*Looking at his watch*] Just about.

BENDER. Well, if I was you I should - -

SIR CHARLES. Dash it! This is England, Bender.

BENDER. You never can be too careful with 'orses, even in England.

SIR CHARLES. [*Going to the telephone*] Give me Luxford sixty. Hallo? Foster? Charles Denbury speaking. Everything all right? . . . Good! . . . Boxing her by the eleven o'clock. Just starting? Right! Take care of her. Good-bye!

BENDER. Jo, what about a prawn and a spot o'

the boy before we start. See you at the Races, Sir Charles.

The TWO BOOKMAKERS *move towards the commercial room, and go out.*

SIR CHARLES. Gather ye champagne while ye may. Are you on my mare, Mr East?

MR EAST. I have that pleasure.

SIR CHARLES. Hear what that fellow was saying?

MR EAST. I'm afraid so.

SIR CHARLES. Sir John Mazer—a millionaire! Amusing how horses breed suspicion! Any experience of racing?

MR EAST. I once went, Sir Charles. A gentleman whom I did not know was so kind as to back several horses for me—they were all last.

SIR CHARLES. They would be.

MR EAST. And on my way home I played at three cards.

SIR CHARLES. That's usual, too.

MR EAST. I had selected the right card, when, unfortunately, they had to leave the train.

SIR CHARLES. With your money?

MR EAST. And my watch.

SIR CHARLES. Well, we all buy experience. I've had to buy mine in Africa.

MR EAST. I was wondering—if you go out there again, Sir Charles, whether you could take me?

SIR CHARLES. You!

MR EAST. I am very fond of animals; and, if I may say so, I can face anything with a camera except old ladies.

SIR CHARLES. It's an idea, Mr East. Only I've put my last shirt on my mare, and if she wins I shan't need to go out again, thank God.

MR EAST. I must hope then that she will win. But there is a certain dreariness in civilised photography.

SIR CHARLES. I hate leaving England, myself. You're not serious, are you?

MR EAST. Quite serious. I think I should be a success with lions. My canary feeds out of my mouth.

SIR CHARLES. [*Going towards the smoking-room, but stopping to say*] These aren't the days to chuck a safe job.

MR EAST. Safety first is rather boreing, Sir Charles.

SIR CHARLES. That's the spirit. All right, then. If I do go, it's a bargain. I'd love to have someone from the old county.

He is going out into the smoking-room when JOAN MAZER, *the pretty, but very modern, daughter of* SIR JOHN MAZER, *comes in from the garden, and halts to look at him. She is followed by* SIR JOHN MAZER'S SECRETARY, *a singularly lady-like person, made up to a certain shortage of her uncertain age.*

JOAN. [*Looking at* MR EAST, *who is smiling and rubbing his hands—sotto voce*] Looney! Shall we play pills, Miss Card?

MISS CARD. A never have, but A should lake to tray. [*They take cues.*]

JOAN. I'm rotten myself. [*To* BARMAN, *who is bringing in freshly-washed glasses*] The carburetter's gone phut. D'you mind letting us know when the car's all right—Sir John Mazer's car.

BARMAN. Right, Miss. The shover's comin' in when he's ready.

JOAN. [*To* Miss CARD] Dad'll be pretty sick if this Flying Kite beats Evolution. Are you going to back her, Miss Card?

Miss CARD. A hardly think Sir John would lake me to, Miss Mazer. A think he would prefer me to have ma little bit on his own horse.

JOAN. You *are* a posh secretary. I shall put my skirt on Flying Kite.

Miss CARD. You won't lose too much—he, he!

JOAN. Sir Charles looks a perfect darling. It was providential breaking down; this makes the fourth time I've run across him this week; and I haven't spoken to him yet.

Miss CARD. But how singulah!

JOAN *plays and misses.*

JOAN. Well, I'm going to break the ice to-day. Your turn, Miss Card. [Miss CARD *plays.*

Miss CARD. He, he! A've missed.

JOAN. Have a cocktail?

Miss CARD. A should love one.

JOAN. Two dry Martinis, please. [*Playing and missing*] I do wish Dad would put in a table at Luxford. I cannot play this game. [*To* BARMAN] You needn't mark. [*Lighting cigarette. To* Mr EAST] D'you mind if we have a window open?

MR EAST. Not at all. Fresh air is good even for lunatics, I believe. [*He opens the window in bay.*]

JOAN. I say, I didn't mean you to hear me.

MR EAST. I was afraid you didn't.

JOAN. Well, we all look potty at times, don't we?

MISS CARD. [*Preparing to play*] A do when A'm playing billiards. [*Misses*] He, he! A've missed.

The ladies take the cocktails from the BARMAN.

JOAN. [*To* MR EAST] Do you play pills?

MR EAST. Only snooker, I fear.

JOAN. How marvellous!

MR EAST. If I may ask, why?

JOAN. [*Taken aback*] Oh! I don't know. Why is it marvellous, Miss Card? [*Plays and misses.*]

MISS CARD. Snooker! He, he! [*Plays and misses*] A wondah whay A miss.

BARMAN. [*To* JOAN *playing, and missing even her own ball*] If you cut the cloth, Miss, it's five quid.

JOAN. Not for beginners, surely?

The BARMAN *with a shrug goes into the commercial room.*

MR EAST. If you were to point your cue rather at the ball than at the cloth ——

JOAN. I've tried that; then the cue slips up.

MR EAST. Perhaps if you placed the thumb more firmly against the joint of the forefinger ——

JOAN. What would happen then?

MR EAST. Then I think you might hit your own ball.

JOAN. That'd be marvellous. I'll try. How's that? [*Plays and misses.*]

MR EAST. Your ball *has* moved, you see.

JOAN. [*Taking chalk*] I believe it's all done by chalk. Isn't it, Mr —— ? [*Chalking cue.*]

MR EAST. East, if I may say so.

JOAN. East ? Oh ! I say, that last photo you took of my Dad was marvellous, Mr East. [*Offering chalk*] Chalk, Miss Card ?

MISS CARD. [*Taking chalk*] It was delaightful. The expression of the ayes.

MR EAST. I was rather worried about that photograph.

JOAN. Oh ! but it's got his best bulldog expression, with just that splash of Henry Ford that's so valuable.

MR EAST. Yes, Sir John is one of the hopes of England.

MISS CARD. [*Who has been chalking her cue*] May one chalk the ball ?

MR EAST. I'm afraid it is not done by the best players.

MISS CARD. Quate ! [*Playing*] He, he ! A haven't missed.

JOAN. Do you know Sir Charles Denbury ?

MR EAST. Yes.

JOAN. I wish you'd introduce me. He must simply hate us for having his place.

MR EAST. He was very attached to it.

JOAN. I suppose he was frightfully hard up. Of course the land's worth nothing ; land never is now.

MISS CARD. The farmers are quate extortionate, and always behaind with the rent. I fear that land is a whate elephant.

JOAN. Don't you think Sir Charles is very attractive, Mr East?

MR EAST. He seems a very nice man.

JOAN. I've absolutely fallen for him—he's so brown and wrinkly. [*Plays and messes.*] Why don't you laugh at us?

MR EAST. I am not feeling very gay.

JOAN. Why?

MR EAST. My dog is ill.

JOAN. Oh! I hate animals to be ill.

MR EAST. "When pain and anguish wring the brow."—Excuse me, I must go to him.

He goes out by the French window.

JOAN. [*Looking after him.*] That ministering angel wheeze! Don't you hate it, Miss Card?

MISS CARD. No, A rather lake it. A love Tennyson.

JOAN. Let's go and see his poor tike.

MISS CARD. Quate!

As they go out through the French window the COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER *with his sample bag and bowler hat on comes in from the commercial room, followed by the* BARMAN.

C. TRAV. Quate! 'Ow culchad! Hairs and grices! Why the 'ell can't she speak the King's English?

He crosses to the door into the hall and goes out.

The BARMAN, *in possession of the scene, replaces cues and balls. He is retiring behind his bar when* SIR CHARLES *comes in from the smoking-room, followed by the young* JOURNALIST.

BARMAN. Some miners want to see you, Sir Charles. They're in the commercial room.

SIR CHARLES. All right!

The BARMAN *goes out into the commercial room.*

JOURNALIST. You were just saying about Evolution, Sir Charles?

SIR CHARLES. There's always someone in its grip. Remember the old cabbies? No, you wouldn't. Now it's miners and farmers; and bookies and landlords for comic relief.

JOURNALIST. And what's the remedy, Sir? Are you one of those who put it all on the politician?

SIR CHARLES. Poor devils, no!

JOURNALIST. But don't you think they might do more, Sir?

SIR CHARLES. If they pulled together, certainly.

JOURNALIST. But isn't it the essence of politics that they shouldn't?

SIR CHARLES. Looks like it. Labour pulls one way. Big Business pulls another. The Liberals prance and the Tories stick their toes in.

JOURNALIST. Then you think the situation's hopeless?

SIR CHARLES. Well, the country's getting richer all the time.

JOURNALIST. Yes. That makes it all the harder on the victims, doesn't it?

SIR CHARLES. Ever noticed a growing plantation—how the trees push up at each other's expense? It's the same with us, camouflage it as you like.

JOURNALIST. But in the present state of affairs—What would you do, Sir, if you had your way?

SIR CHARLES. Increase agriculture; speed up emigration; abolish the slums.

JOURNALIST. Do you think we shall?

SIR CHARLES. No. In these circumstances you'll have something to drink?

JOURNALIST. No, thank you, Sir. I feel rather upset.

SIR CHARLES. Brandy's a good restorative. [*To the returning* BARMAN] George, two of the old Courvoisier.

The BARMAN *brings the brandies. He has been followed in by the* MINERS, *seven in number, ranging from* TEBBUTT, *aged sixty-seven, to* RICHARD TULLEY, *aged twenty-six.* TEBBUTT *is a little, old, blue-marked miner with indrawn cheeks, as good a worker as the youngest.* TULLEY *is a cheery, sturdy, grizzled, square-faced and sensible man of fifty-eight.* HODGKIN *is a bull of a man of fifty-six, with a shock of red hair gone grey.* GASCOYNE *is lame, with refined eyes and brows, and a cave-man's jaw; he is forty-eight.* CLARKE *is a tall fine fellow of thirty-six, with the blue eyes and pink cheeks that come of perfect health and an opinion of himself.* MITCHELL *is thirty—he looks worried to death.* RICHARD TULLEY *is yellow-haired, with a broad, frank face.*

SIR CHARLES. [*Raising his glass and tossing off his brandy*] Very glad to see you all again. What'll you have? George!

GEORGE *prepares a variety of drinks according to various tastes.*

What's wrong with your leg, Gascoyne?

GASCOYNE. Bit 'f 'n accident in ta pit, Sir Charles, broke ma leg in two places.

SIR CHARLES. Bad luck!

GASCOYNE. Well, a pension's soomthing nowadays.

The MEN *are standing along the bar;* SIR CHARLES *is between them and the fire. The* JOURNALIST *is seated on the arm of the chair below the fireplace.*

SIR CHARLES. Do you want a tip, my friends?

HODGKIN. Eh, but we're all on Flyin' Kite, Sir Charles. Mo Bender's got our money. Is she t'flyer they say?

SIR CHARLES. If she doesn't win, Hodgkin, there's nothing in form; and she's fit to run for her life.

TULLEY. Sir Charles, can'st tell us wha Sir John Mazer closed ta Blue Pit? Seein' tha've lost tha royalties, they've maybe given tha t'reasons, now th' 'art back 'ome.

SIR CHARLES. Well! They showed me the accounts, Tulley. It hasn't paid for two years. They're dropping money all the time.

TULLEY. After all t'mooney they spent last year t' bring't oop to date! It's sooch bad management.

SIR CHARLES. I can't judge of that. They told me there was nothing for it but to cut their losses.

TEBBUTT. Forty year ah've worked in that pit. Ta's been a good pit, and 'tas got plenty life in't yet.

GASCOYNE. They'll never tek oop ta pit again—'twas always wet. The water's in. 'T's stagnated for good an' all.

MITCHELL. Aye; and so's us stagnated. Without a by your leave—done for—the lot of us. The managers 'ave got new jobs. 'Tis only us chaps.

A shuffle among the others, as if deprecating this note of shrillness.

TULLEY. Ah! well—the 'ead manager was a good man. I've noothin' against 'im. He was very oop-set when they closed. In ma opinion th' 'ad too much over'ead.

SIR CHARLES. God may know about that, Tulley. I don't. Coal's in a bad way all round.

The TWO LADIES *come in at the French window and slide round to the window-seat, where they sit listening.* MR EAST *follows, and stands just inside the French window.*

GASCOYNE. 'Tis in the marketin'—there's too much lost between ta pit'ead an' ta pooblic.

CLARKE. They've no call to shut a pit till they've found us chaps fresh livel'ood. 'Tis fair slaughter. That Mazer sticks at noothin'.

HODGKIN. 'E's a 'ard man Mazer. A Coompany 'as no guts.

JOAN. [*Sotto voce*] That's one for my dad.

MISS CARD. Pooah! Sir John! His inside—he, he!

JOURNALIST. [*Suddenly, as it were, coming to life*] It's terrible, I think—the position.

TEBBUTT. [*Out of a somewhat disconcerted silence.*] Eh, laad! 'tis that.

JOURNALIST. But now that the Public are roused——

HODGKIN. The Public! Public's all raight, but 't'as got its 'ands full payin' taxes, an' keeping ta police in order.

JOURNALIST. What will you do?

MITCHELL. Watch our feet coomin' through our boots. What else?

Again an uncasy shuffle at this outburst.

JOURNALIST. [*Aside.*] The Government ought to have looked ahead sooner.

HODGKIN. Eh! But Gooverniments are always late with the milk. When t' pig's dead they'll cure it, fast enoof.

SIR CHARLES. Are you out to take jobs if they're found for you?

MITCHELL. If ta worth takkin'. Better be stagnated 't home than stagnated some road Gawd knows where.

HODGKIN. Noon of us oop in years'll ever get jobs again, Sir Charles. Who'll tek an old un? Mebbe they'll send us abroad for slaughter, like t' old 'osses.

SIR CHARLES. My God! That's bitter, Hodgkin.

HODGKIN. I'm not bitter, Sir Charles. Not at all. We're oop against it. The coontry's in a moodle—that's a fact.

SIR CHARLES. Well, she always muddles through in time, Hodgkin, if that's any help.

C

TEBBUTT. Can't wait long myssen. Sixty-seven ah be. But ah can shift with the yoongest, yet.

SIR CHARLES. I know you can, Tebbutt. Stout fellow!

MITCHELL. The Bolshies'll be busy 'ere before long.

TULLEY. We don't want none o' they chaps.

MITCHELL. There's flesh and blood to be considered.

GASCOYNE. [*Deeply*] Miners father to son, and nowt but weed-stuff now.

SIR CHARLES. Why not the Dominions?

CLARKE. Not for me! The blinkin' things they want to know about a man. Aren't ah good enoof for them?

HODGKIN. They'll never tak the old uns.

TEBBUTT. Ma grandsoon went to Canady, but 'e's coom back.

SIR CHARLES. Why?

TEBBUTT. 'Ome-sick.

SIR CHARLES. So was I in Africa, Tebbutt, but you learn to put up with it. There's Mr East here begging me to take him if I have to go again.

HODGKIN. [*Turning*] Mr East, that picture of mine's fine; the missus says she'd know it in the dark.

MR EAST. Does she know it in the light, Mr Hodgkin?

HODGKIN. Ah! That she does, she says you got my Soonday expression to the life.

MR EAST. [*To the* MINERS *generally*] I wanted to say, as one of the public, I am terribly sorry for your

position here. I shall be so happy to take your pictures without charge, if that is any comfort.

TULLEY. Mr East, shake 'ands. Every man, woman, and child'll coom to thee.

MR EAST. [*Shaking hands*] I'm sure of that, Mr Tulley.

SIR CHARLES. About my mare—I was going to suggest that you should all be a pound on her with me both ways.

JOAN. [*Sotto voce to* MISS CARD] Isn't he marvellous!

MISS CARD. Divane!

HODGKIN. [*With enthusiasm*] Eh! We'll noon of us say no to thaat, Sir Charles; an' I 'ope ta mare doos you joostice.

Enter BENDER *and* TODD, *followed by the* INNKEEPER, *come in from the commercial room.*

SIR CHARLES. Ah! Bender, all these gentlemen are on a pound with me both ways. Take their names.

While TODD *is noting the names* JOAN *slips round the table.*

JOAN. [*To* BENDER, *taking out notes*] Will you put me on two pounds to win and one for a place, please.

BENDER. Right-o, Missy! Eights and twos. Jo, take 'er name.

TODD. What name?

JOAN. [*With a look at* SIR CHARLES] Joan Mazer.

TODD. [*Staring at her*] Mazer, did you say? Sir John's daughter? [JOAN *nods.*]

SIR CHARLES. [*More unconscious of her than she is of him*] George, drinks all round.

The BARMAN *busies himself. The telephone bell rings, and the* INNKEEPER *attends to it.*

INNKEEPER. Foster to speak to you, Sir Charles.

SIR CHARLES *goes to the telephone.*

SIR CHARLES. What! . . . *What!* . . .

At the first sound there is a pricking of ears, at the second, a dead silence.

SIR CHARLES. Good God! The ruffian! . . . Do with him? Bring the brute here. . . . Can she walk? . . . Only just? My God! 'Phone the Vet, and lead her gently home. When I've seen this swine I'll be down. Don't let him get away from you. [*He leaves the 'phone and comes down, his face utterly changed.*] Foul play!

JOURNALIST. [*Taking out a note-book*] May I ask—— ?

SIR CHARLES. No! Put that away. If you stay here, kindly say nothing. [*To* BENDER] My poor mare's been smashed at with a spanner by a brute of a tramp—she's dead lame.

JOAN. Oh! No!

BENDER. [*Shaking his head*] Eh, Jo? That's bad.

There is a growl from the MINERS.

HODGKIN. Eh! boot that's moocky work—a doomb animal.

SIR CHARLES. The swine'll be here in five minutes.

MR EAST. I trust the poor creature's leg is not broken?

SIR CHARLES. But for the knee-pad it might well have been.

HODGKIN. 'Ow did it 'appen, Sir Charles?

SIR CHARLES. They were taking her across the station yard to box her when this brute darted out from behind a truck, swung a spanner full force on her off fore, and bolted back to a motor-cycle. Luckily the thing didn't click, and they got him. The mare can hardly put foot to ground. So bang goes the Cup. Sorry, men.

TULLEY. Ma God, Sir Charles, 'tis a shockin' thing.

SIR CHARLES. And who's behind it? This fellow was a tool of course.,

BENDER. What did I tell you, Sir Charles?

SIR CHARLES. Oh! That! Nonsense!

MITCHELL. So Mr Bender knew, did 'e? [*His tone is unpleasant.*]

BENDER. [*Sharply.*] What's biting *you*?

CLARKE. Fooney thing to know!

MITCHELL. Takin' our mooney on the mare!

SIR CHARLES. Easy, easy! friends! We all know Mo Bender.

BENDER. [*Very angry, to the* MINERS] 'Ere, you! I'll 'ave none o' your money. 'And them their money, Jo, every one. I'll 'ave no man blackenin' my character. 'And the young lady 'er money too, and this young man 'ere. [*He points to the* JOURNALIST.]

SIR CHARLES. Steady, Bender! It was all fair betting.

BENDER. Ah! 'twas all fair bettin', but I'll 'ave

no man givin' me a black mark. I've a good name, I 'ave.

HODGKIN. Eh, man! but ye didn't tell us what ye telled Sir Charles.

BENDER. Why should I gossip to a set o' bl·—— [*Catches sight of the* YOUNG WOMEN, *who are hanging on his words, and refrains*] black beetles like you?

MISS CARD. [*Uncontrollably*] He, he!

BENDER. You're gettin' your money back, aren't you?

SIR CHARLES. Very fair, Bender; too fair, I think. My bets stand.

JOAN. And mine.

BENDER. No; pay the young lady, Jo. As for those that think a bookmaker's not as honest as the best, I'll show 'em.

TULLEY. Ah never said nowt agen ye, Bender.

GASCOYNE. Nor ah.

RICHARD T. Nor ah.

TEBBUTT. Fair's the word wi' Mo Bender.

BENDER. [*Somewhat mollified*] 'T makes no matter. I don' want your dollars. I'll be on the rates meself before long. Pay 'em off, Jo. Pay off the blinkin' lot.

While TODD *is refunding the* MINERS' *stakes, the sound of a car is heard.* SIR CHARLES *crosses, Right, and looks out of the window.*

SIR CHARLES. They're coming! Haddon, can I see this brute here? Would you all be good enough to clear into the commercial room for a bit? Young ladies, d'you mind going into the garden? Mr East, you can stay if you like. [*To the* JOURNALIST, *who is*

making a sign as if he also would like to stay] No; I'd rather you didn't, sir.

In a disappointed way the crowd begins trickling out into the commercial room.

JOAN. [*To* MISS CARD] Shall we stay?

MISS CARD. I fear it would be rather unladylake.

They go out through the French window.

SIR CHARLES *takes his old position, back to the fire.* MR EAST *his old position, on the window-seat. Of the rest, the* INNKEEPER *alone remains, standing behind the bar. The door from the hall is opened, and* TWO MEN, *a* HEAD GROOM *and a* CHAUFFEUR, *enter with a bearded, wild-looking figure between them, whose hands are tied behind his back. They bring him to the centre of the far side of the billiard-table, so that he stands facing* SIR CHARLES.

GROOM. Here he is, Sir Charles.

SIR CHARLES. [*Moving from the fire to the edge of the billiard-table, exactly opposite the tramp*] Free his hands.

The CHAUFFEUR *swings the strap free from the* TRAMP'S *hand.*

GROOM. Terribly sorry, Sir Charles. The blighter was like greased lightnin'.

SIR CHARLES. All right, Foster. Better get back to the mare. If I want help with this fellow, I've got lots handy. [*To the* CHAUFFEUR] Stand by, Gossett.

The HEAD GROOM *salutes and goes out into the hall; the* CHAUFFEUR *comes nearer the* TRAMP.

TRAMP. [*To the immaculate* CHAUFFEUR.] Are you lousy?

CHAUFFEUR. [*In sheer surprise*] I? No.

TRAMP. Then don't you touch me.

SIR CHARLES. I am the owner of the mare you lamed.

TRAMP. [*With a start*] You? Wot's your name?

SIR CHARLES. Sir Charles Denbury. [*The* TRAMP *starts again.*] You can ride a motor-cycle, it seems. Not always a tramp, then?

TRAMP. [*Grinning*] 'Ave it your own way.

SIR CHARLES. Who put you up to this?

The TRAMP *shrugs his dishevelled shoulders.* Have you searched him, Gossett?

CHAUFFEUR. [*Rather ruefully*] Yes, Sir Charles. Nothin' on him.

SIR CHARLES. How much were you to get for trying to break the leg of my poor mare?

TRAMP. Poor? She 'as a better life than me, I know.

SIR CHARLES. You sickening brute! The only thing to be said for you is that those who bribed you are ten times worse. I want their blood so badly, that if you tell me who they are, you shall go scot-free.

TRAMP. An' if there ain't none, Guv'nor?

SIR CHARLES. Bosh! Tell me, or go to gaol.

The TRAMP *turns and is about to dart for the French window, when* MR EAST *with a swift movement grips his throat from behind with both hands. The* TRAMP *gives an astonished gurgle.*

MR EAST. [*From behind him*] Incline the head slightly, if you please.

TRAMP. Leggo. I'll stand easy.

SIR CHARLES. Thank you, MR EAST.

MR EAST places the TRAMP *where he was and removes his hands.*

TRAMP. [*Turning on him*] You put your 'ands on me!

MR EAST. I regret the necessity.

TRAMP. I'll 'ave the law of you.

SIR CHARLES. Rats! Was the cycle yours?

TRAMP. [*Grinning*] Not bleedin' likely!

SIR CHARLES. Where did you sleep last night?

TRAMP. In Choke.

SIR CHARLES. Come now! Give me the name of the man who put you up to this.

TRAMP. [*Grinning*] No one put me up to it.

SIR CHARLES. [*Grimly*] Oh! So you haven't got your blood money yet? Well, it won't come to you for some months.

TRAMP. If I go to quod——

SIR CHARLES. You're going to get the third degree first. What's your name?

TRAMP. We don't 'ave names on the road.

MR EAST. [*To the* TRAMP] You are an Englishman?

TRAMP. I did my bit in the war, anyway.

MR EAST. Was it a large bit?

TRAMP. Middlin'. [*He pulls up a trouser leg and shows a long scar and no sock.*]

MR EAST. Dear me! that was very near the tibia. Why did you sleep in prison last night?

TRAMP. For tryin' to sleep out of it. A poor beggar without a blasted sixpence, and mayn't sleep under the stars o' Gawd.

MR EAST. That is poetry, if I may say so. Being a poet, how could you hit that poor mare?

TRAMP. She'll be all right in a month.

MR EAST. It wasn't very English, was it?

TRAMP. If a man mayn't sleep on English soil, 'e ain't English.

MR EAST. My sympathies are with you about sleeping out. Especially if one is lousy.

TRAMP. 'Oo says I'm lousy?

MR EAST. Pardon me, I understood you to imply it.

TRAMP. Your mistake.

MR EAST. [*Looking at his hands*] Thank you; that is very good news.

SIR CHARLES. [*To the* INNKEEPER] Got a coal-cellar you can lock, Haddon?

INNKEEPER. Yes, Sir Charles.

SIR CHARLES. I may want it for this chap. I'm going to have that name out of him.

TRAMP. [*Turning to the* INNKEEPER] I'll 'ave 'Abeas Corpus against the lot of you. Call this a free country!

MR EAST. Not very. There is imprisonment even for cruelty to animals.

TRAMP. [*Sullenly*] I just 'it her, same as I'd like to 'it you.

MR EAST. But *she* couldn't hit you back.

SIR CHARLES. Were you lying when you said you were in the war?

TRAMP. No.

SIR CHARLES. Where, then? If you've got anything in your favour, make the most of it.

TRAMP. I was gassed at Armonteers. I was blown up on the Somme. I was buried at Chatter Teary. I about died o' fever in Mespot, an' I was drowned comin' 'ome.

SIR CHARLES. I see. The usual record. Where did you get that scar?

TRAMP. I got it savin' a cat at Ginchy.

SIR CHARLES. Saving what?

TRAMP. A bleedin' cat. She was the mascot for my platoon. An' a bit o' shell ran up my leg like a streak o' lightnin'. That cat lived to 'ave three families.

MR EAST. Forgive me, but that sounds an heroic action.

TRAMP. Ah! I fished 'er up with an 'ook out of a gassed pot-hole.

MR EAST. Under fire, if I may ask?

TRAMP. Under fire! D'you think the war was a flahr-show?

MR EAST. No: unfortunately, I was there.

TRAMP. Ah! Thought you'd been taught to speak by a sergeant-major.

MR EAST. Yes; he was very careful that I should not reply to him in his own language. But if you did that for a cat, how could you hit that poor mare?

TRAMP. There you are—at it again.

SIR CHARLES. What were you before the war?

TRAMP. Motor mechanic.

SIR CHARLES. Why didn't you go back to it?

TRAMP. I did. But I 'ad an 'abit of shiverin'. So I lost that. Ah—and I lost something else—[*his face darkens*] and I took to whisky. Why? Because I was 'appy when I 'ad it inside me, and miserable when I 'adn't. That's why!

MR EAST. [*Who has been listening, absorbed*] Go on.

TRAMP. I got to walkin' from town to town lookin' for something regular, but there was a million an' a 'alf out o' work. If all that lot couldn't get a job, what was the use of me tryin'? So I went on the road. I've been on it four years now, an' I don't suppose I'll ever be off it again.

MR EAST. Sleeping under the stars of God?

TRAMP. Ah! What is it to them where I sleep, s'long as I'm not doin' 'arm? *You* can bring out your five bob and say you're 'avin' a fresh air cure, or some such classy bunk, an' they lick your boots and put you in the papers. But a poor beggar that 'ain't got the price of a room on 'im——

MR EAST. True! But for money we should all be in prison.

TRAMP. That's the first sensible word I've 'eard from you.

MR EAST. Thank you so much.

SIR CHARLES. Come now, give me that name. *Somebody* bribed you.

TRAMP. I wish somebody 'ad.

SIR CHARLES. What on earth, then, made you hit a harmless animal? Had you backed another horse?

TRAMP. I 'adn't backed no 'orse. And what's

all this about 'armless animals? You'd shoot a pheasant. 'As 'e done you any 'arm? You'd break 'is leg an' let 'im die a lingerin' death.

SIR CHARLES. Thanks! We won't discuss the ethics of sport.

TRAMP. Nao. And 'ow about this 'ere vivid-suction? You'd take an' 'armless dawg an' cut 'im up.

The BARMAN *enters from the commercial room.*

BARMAN. The miners are gettin' impatient, Sir Charles.

SIR CHARLES. They can come in, Haddon.

The INNKEEPER *goes out.*

MR EAST. If you'll excuse me, I must go to my dog.

SIR CHARLES. Just a moment. George, take Mr East's place down there.

The BARMAN *comes round the table and stands between the* TRAMP *and the French window, out of which* MR EAST *passes.*

Stand him against the wall.

The CHAUFFEUR *and* BARMAN *hustle the* TRAMP *till his back is to the wall, Right.*

The MEN *come in, the* YOUNGER MEN *leading.*

He won't give me the name of the blackguard who put him up to it. Perhaps you can get it from him. [*He lights a cigarette and sits down in the arm-chair below the fire.*]

The JOURNALIST, *who has followed the* MEN *in, clings uneasily to the other arm-chair.* TULLEY, TEBBUTT, GASCOYNE *and the*

INNKEEPER *are behind the bar; the other* FOUR MEN *in front of it, with* CLARKE *nearest, and* HODGKIN *farthest from the* TRAMP.

CLARKE. Well, laad, think ye can get away wi' it, do ye? We're all a matter o' twel' poond out o' pocket owin' t' you. That needs compensation, it does.

The TRAMP, *who has shown signs of real uncasiness, slowly regains his hardihood.*

HODGKIN. Ma God, he's a lousy chaap!

SIR CHARLES. He says he was in the war, if that's in his favour.

CLARKE. Ba Goom, 'tis not. Sh'd know better. Was in t'war myssen.

RICHARD T. Dirty dog to soss an 'orse lik' thaat.

HODGKIN. Mr Innkeeper, what's for lunch to-day?

INNKEEPER. Beef—chicken.

HODGKIN. 'Ot or cold?

INNKEEPER. Hot.

HODGKIN. Thaat's fine. [*To* RICHARD] Goo an' fetch ta feathers from ta kitchen, laad. Mitchell, fetch ta boocket o' tar, that's oop against ta fence.

JOURNALIST. I say—this isn't America.

CLARKE. If 'twas, 'e'd 'ave a rope round 'is neck be now.

HODGKIN. 'E'll strip orkard. Laads, we'll toss 'oo's to strip ta lousy chaap.

The FOUR YOUNGER MEN *and* HODGKIN *put coins on the backs of their hands.*

King George to strip un. [*They look at the result.*

Richard, Mitchell, Clarke. Richard, off and get ta stoof!

RICHARD *and* MITCHELL *go out into the commercial room.*

TRAMP. I'll fight the biggest of yer.

CLARKE. Na, laad, na. You've 'ad your foon, 'tis our turn now.

MR EAST *re-enters from the garden, and the faces of the* TWO LADIES *are seen peering in at the open window; they, too, re-enter by the French window.*

TRAMP. [*To* SIR CHARLES] Are you goin' to sit there and watch 'em lynch me?

SIR CHARLES *nods.*

CLARKE. We got families to feed, m'laad; you've lost us mebbee a coople o' months' livin'. We're goin' to tell you off all right.

MITCHELL *and* RICHARD TULLEY *re-enter with the bucket of tar and the feathers, which they place on the bar.*

MR EAST. [*Starting forward*] Are you really going to tar and feather him?

HODGKIN. Thaat's right, Mr East.

MR EAST. Is it not rather extreme?

HODGKIN. Roogh joostice. But 't'll larn un to be a tud. 'E'll be a nice soobject for a picture, Mr East.

SIR CHARLES. [*Rising*] Haddon!

The INNKEEPER *goes down to him.*

Will one of you take George's place, please.

MITCHELL *takes the* BARMAN'S *place.*

Now, Haddon, take George and this gentleman away,

and keep away yourself. I'll see it's not done on your premises.

JOURNALIST. Really, Sir Charles, I do think——

SIR CHARLES. Yes ; go and think in there.

TULLEY. [*Coming forward*] Sir Charles, ah'm not likin' this, myssen.

SIR CHARLES. Suppose you go, too, then, Tulley. Tebbutt ?

TEBBUTT. Na. 'Twill be a gradely sight. [*He stands pat against the bar.*]

HADDON *shepherds the* JOURNALIST *out into the smoking-room.* TULLEY, *too, goes out into the commercial room. The* BARMAN, *who has come round the bottom of the billiard-table, hesitates, looking back longingly.*

SIR CHARLES. No, George. Off you go !

The BARMAN *goes out into the commercial room.* Gossett, somebody take your place—you get off too. I don't want anyone to lose his job over this.

RICHARD TULLEY *takes the place of* GOSSETT, *who goes reluctantly out into the hall.*

Now, Mr East.

MR EAST. I should prefer to remain.

SIR CHARLES. Very well. Gascoyne, you'd better go—you might lose your pension.

GASCOYNE *hesitates, then limps out into the commercial room. The* TRAMP *has watched these preparations for his execution with a sort of increasing wildness : he now starts forward to the edge of the billiard-table.*

TRAMP. Call this yuman ?

SIR CHARLES. Extremely. [*Noticing the* LADIES] Young ladies, do you mind going away ?

JOAN. Oh ! but, Sir Charles, it's so thrilling !

SIR CHARLES. Good God !

MISS CARD. Quate !

SIR CHARLES. Well, stand clear of that window, please !

The LADIES *think better of it, and go out.*

Now then. We're not bluffing. None of us here have anything at stake. I tried my mare for a certainty so far as there is such a thing. By laming her, you condemned me to exile. You took a nice little sum of money from each of my friends here, to whom it would have been a Godsend. You shall go free if you give me the name of the blackguard who put you up to this. If not —— [*He points to the basket.*]

TRAMP. [*Sullenly*] I told yer —no one put me up to it.

SIR CHARLES. An immaculate conception. Then why ——?

For answer the TRAMP *breaks suddenly free and seizes a cue that has been left on the table. Grasping it with both hands, he swings it round his head, backing towards the French window. The* MEN *recoil out of reach of the formidable swing. The* TRAMP *turns suddenly to escape through the French window, and finds* MR EAST *standing in front of it.*

MR EAST. I fear I am in your way.

TRAMP. [*Too close to use the cue*] You little barstard!

The MEN *have closed in on the* TRAMP *again and seized the cue. The* TRAMP *drops it and stands hunched up, covering his face with his arms.*

MR EAST. [*Locking the French window and putting the key in his pocket. To the* MEN] Might I suggest that you leave him to me for a minute?

SIR CHARLES. Stand back, my friends.

Something in the TRAMP'S *attitude has impressed everybody. The* MEN *move to the top of the table and stand in a group, talking in low voices.* SIR CHARLES *stands watching.*

MR EAST. Might I speak to him in private. I shall be happy to be tarred and feathered if I let him escape.

SIR CHARLES. [*To the* MEN] Shall we go out for a bit and stand by?

The MEN *go out into the hall, and* SIR CHARLES *walks into the smoking-room.*

MR EAST. We are alone, if I may say so.

TRAMP. [*Dropping his arm*] Oh! let a chap be!

MR EAST. Had you some special trouble that made you run amok?

TRAMP. Ah!

MR EAST. Will you tell me the nature of it?

TRAMP. No, I won't!

MR EAST. Has it to do with a woman, then?

TRAMP. Yes.

MR EAST. Your wife?

TRAMP. 'Ere! What are you—a bleedin' corkscrew? Yes, my wife.

MR EAST. Something that made you curse your God.

TRAMP. Gawd! What should I do with a Gawd? Let me alone—I'm through.

MR EAST. [*After gazing at him*] Will you promise to sit here a minute?

The TRAMP *nods, turns up to the window-seat and sits bent in a sort of circle, as you may see a wood-louse curled up to avoid death.* MR EAST *crosses to the door into the coffee-room.*

MR EAST. Sir Charles.

SIR CHARLES *comes out to him and they stand before the fire with their eyes on the* TRAMP.

MR EAST. Some special trouble in connection with his wife seems to have made him run amok. And if he was really bribed perhaps we should respect him for nor squealing.

SIR CHARLES. Um! I always hated seeing a fox broken up. But I don't know if the men will let him go.

MR EAST. I think I could induce them.

SIR CHARLES. Well! Try!

MR EAST. [*Goes to the door into the hall*] Will you come in, please? [*The* FOUR MINERS *come in.* [*Pointing*] You see him.

The MEN *come down till they can see the hunched-up figure on the window-seat.*

He is down-and-out, if I may so express it. Sir Charles thought you might like to let him go, having your own misfortunes, and being Englishmen.

Uneasy movements among the MEN, *then* HODGKIN *heaves himself and speaks.*

HODGKIN. That's all right, Mr East, that's all right. Let the beggar go. We want the chaap that bribed 'im. 'Ere Richard, poot that stoof back.

The younger MEN *move,* RICHARD *and* MITCHELL *take the tar and feathers, and they all clear off into the hall.*

Sir Charles, I 'ope the mare'll soon be 'andy again. 'Tis roogh loock.

SIR CHARLES *crosses to him and wrings his hand.*

SIR CHARLES. By George, Hodgkin, I wish to God I could do something for you all; but we're in the soup together now.

HODGKIN. That's right. Spilt milk—ye can't scoop it oop. [*Turning to* MR EAST] Eh! Mr East—[*Pointing with his thumb towards the* TRAMP] that fellow—ef you want to photograph a bad dream. Well, good loock to you; good loock, Sir Charles!

He follows the others out.

SIR CHARLES. What good chaps! Here! Let the brute go before I think better of it. [*He goes up to the fire and stands staring into it.*]

MR EAST *crosses to the French window, unlocks and opens it, then approaches the* TRAMP.

MR EAST. [*Touching him on the shoulder*] There is nothing now to detain you.

The TRAMP *looks up, shrugs his unkempt body, then rises. He stands a moment gazing at* MR EAST. *Then, with a shrug he shuffles to the door and passes out.*

SIR CHARLES. [*Turning from the fire*] This is a queer thing, you know, after what that bookie was saying.

MR EAST. Sir John Mazer is too rich not to be honest, Sir Charles.

SIR CHARLES. I shall go and see him all the same. The beggar ought to do something for the miners. I must be off to my poor mare now.

MR EAST. It is a terrible calamity, Sir Charles.

SIR CHARLES. Yes. It's good-bye to England for me. [*Catching sight of* JOAN *in the garden*] Who's that pretty young vampire? I'm always seeing her about.

MR EAST. [*As* JOAN *comes in through the French window*] That is Sir John Mazer's daughter, Sir Charles.

SIR CHARLES. The deuce she is!

JOAN. Forgive my butting in. But our car's in action again—could I give you a lift anywhere to save time?

SIR CHARLES [*Dubiously*] Well—thanks, if you could drop me at the Stables.

JOAN. I'd drop you anywhere. I never knew such frightful luck. You've been too marvellous.

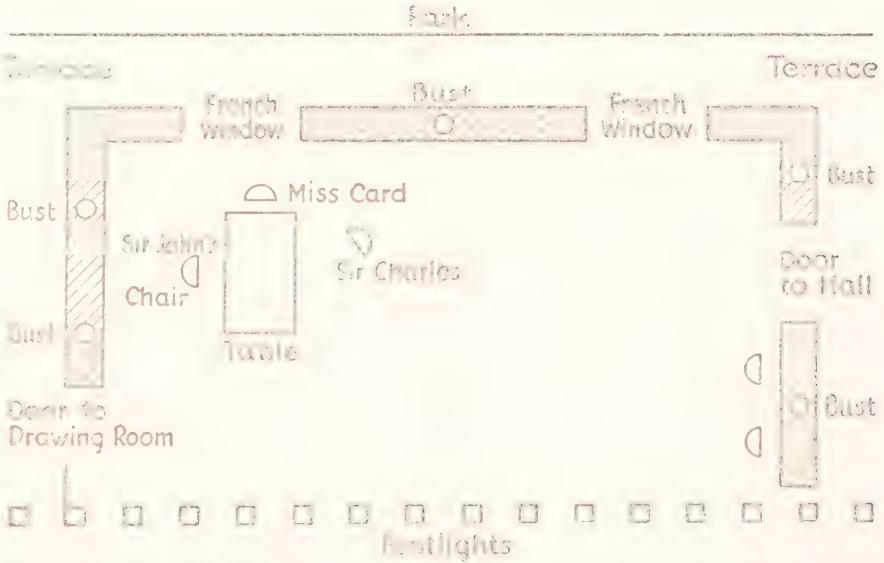
SIR CHARLES *bows, and she precedes him into the hall with a bright look back.*

MR EAST. [*To himself—with his head on one side*] Dear me! The human eye is very powerful! [*Suddenly remembering*] Oh! My poor dog!

He goes towards the French window as

The CURTAIN *falls*

ACT II


Park
Terrace
Terrace
French Window
Bust
French Window
Bust
Bust
Miss Card
Sir John's Chair
Sir Charles
Table
Bust
Door to Hall
Bust
Bust
Door to Drawing Room
Footlights

ACT II

The following morning, a few minutes later, in the study of SIR JOHN MAZER, *king of industry, at Luxford Hall, once the seat of* SIR CHARLES DENBURY, *not far from Babbleigh. The side walls of the room are lined to within some five feet of the ceiling with books that have a virginal aspect. Along the top of the bookcases are busts of Napoleon, Oliver Cromwell, Abraham Lincoln, and Mussolini. A door down stage, Right, leads into the drawing-room, and a door opposite into the hall. French windows Right and Left in the back wall lead on to a terrace and look over a park. Between them is a bookcase, which supports the bust of Julius Cæsar.*

A table, sumptuously mumtioned with papers and books of reference, with a telephone and a bowl of flowers, stands out parallel with the right-hand wall, and at it, back to the wall, sits SIR JOHN, *a stocky man with a broad, self-made face, and a general look as if he were carved out of rubber, a material, indeed, which first made his fortune. He may be under sixty, and he may not. To him, from the hall, enters his lady-in-waiting,* MISS CARD.

SIR JOHN. Very late, Miss Card, very late!

MISS CARD. Miss Joan and A broke down, Sir John—at Bableigh. By the way, Sir John, Flying Kate is scratched.

SIR JOHN. What's that? Flying Kate—Denbury's mare? Why?

MISS CARD. The pooah deah was injured by a tramp, and they had to scratch her.

SIR JOHN. By Gosh! That's luck! I was afraid of that mare, Miss Card. Evolution'll about win now.

MISS CARD. A hope so, Sir John. The Press will be heah very soon now. Am A to telephone for the photographah?

SIR JOHN. Yes, get that little chap in Nunchester High Street—what's his name—East. I'll sign and seal as soon as they're here.

MISS CARD. We saw Mr East at the "Rose and Nettle" at Bableigh, Sir John. Shall I send a Ford for him, there? [SIR JOHN *nods*. [*Telephoning*] Bableigh fave fave . . . no . . . not nane fave . . . double fave. . . . Could you get me Mr East? Oh! . . . Mr East, would you very kandly come at once to Luxford Hall to take a pictchah? . . . At once. . . . We will send a car to fetch you. . . . Yes, an interior. . . . No, not mane. . . . Sir John's. . . . Thank you; that is very kaud of you. The car will be with you in ten minutes. [*She drops the receiver and takes up a speaking tube*] Is that Whate? Whate, would you kandly order a Ford to go at once to "The Rose and Nettle" at Bableigh, to fetch Mr East, the

photographah. At once. Thank you. And if the Press comes it can be shown in. [*To* SIR JOHN] Will you have the Rolls Royce to go to the races, Sir John?

SIR JOHN *nods.*

Oh! And, Whate -the Rolls Royce for the races at one-fifteen. [*To* SIR JOHN] May A run through your engagements, Sir John?

SIR JOHN. Ah! Shoot!

MISS CARD. It is now eleven-thirty. Saign cheques and telephone Malayan Rubbah. Eleven-forty: The Press, concerning the Coaline Process Combane. Eleven-fifty: Affix the seal, and saign—with pictchahs. Twelve o'clock: See two bulldogs. Twelve-ten: Consider draft speech for the meeting of National Asphalt and Coal Tar Corporation. Twelve-twenty: Superintendent of the Casual Wards. Twelve-thirty: A have nothing for twelve-thirty.

SIR JOHN. Thank God!

MISS CARD. Twelve-forty: Papers in the Pontypool Power Conversion. Twelve-fifty: Lunch. One-fifteen: To Nunchester races. Fave——

SIR JOHN. That'll do, Miss Card; shan't be alive. Give me the cheques, and get on to Malayan Rubber.

MISS CARD *places before him a pile of cheques, and takes up the telephone.*

MISS CARD. A trunk call to London, please. Precaisely. . . . Trunks: City, O three six nane . . . not fave . . . nane—nane . . . no, not nane nane—six nane.

As she hangs up the 'phone JOAN *enters through the French window.*

JOAN. Heard about Flying Kite, Dad?

SIR JOHN *nods.*

Isn't it perfectly rotten?

SIR JOHN. [*Sniffing away.*] Hard lines on Derbury!

JOAN. Yes, and he's such a dear. The miners at Bableigh nearly tarred and feathered that tramp.

SIR JOHN. Serve the scoundrel right!

JOAN. We took Sir Charles to the stables. The mare's quite lame. I say, Dad, the miners there are awfully on their uppers.

SIR JOHN. [*Snorting.*] Eh! What! Bableigh! Beast of a pit that—always was.

JOAN. I've been thinking.

SIR JOHN. Glad to hear it.

JOAN. *You* closed that pit.

SIR JOHN. [*Signing*] Course I closed it; throwing good money after bad.

JOAN. But—Dad——

SIR JOHN. Don't worry me, child. [*Signs on.*]

JOAN. If a child mayn't worry its own father, whose father—— [*Suddenly off*] I'd backed Flying Kite.

SIR JOHN. What d'you do that for, with my horse running?

JOAN. Because she'd have beaten him.

SIR JOHN. Well, now she won't; and you've lost your money.

JOAN. No, I haven't.

SIR JOHN. [*With arrested pen*] How?

JOAN. The bookmaker gave it me back.

SIR JOHN. Why?

JOAN. He was sensitive.

SIR JOHN. [*With a laugh*] What! A bookmaker? Fear of the Tote must be undermining their constitutions. A lot of those chaps are marked for slaughter. Good thing, too.

JOAN. Do you like seeing people ruined, Dad?

SIR JOHN. What d'you mean? Of course I don't.

JOAN. I hate ruin—it's so wintry.

The telephone bell rings.

MISS CARD. Yes? Is thet Malayan Rubbah? Sir John Mazer will speak to the Managah, please. . . . Is thet the Managah? [*Handing telephone to* SIR JOHN] The Managah, Sir John.

SIR JOHN. [*Phoning*] Hallo! Look here! That fresh issue—how's it going? Sticky? . . . Um. . . . Tell 'em they've dam' well got to put it over, if they want any more business from me. . . . No. . . . I give 'em a week. . . . Oh! yes, I know—depression. But it's got to be done, Wilkin, let 'em bite on that. . . . Keep me informed. Good-bye! [*Hanging up receiver*] They're all the same—no guts. [*The speaking tube whistles softly.*

MISS CARD. Yes. Whate. . . . The Press has arraved, Sir John.

SIR JOHN. [*Frowning*] Well, get my "What to Give 'Em" book out, and look up Combinations.

JOAN. Nothing like silk, dear.

SIR JOHN. Don't be a monkey. Got it, Miss Card? [*Takes from* MISS CARD *a slim book. Opens. Reads.*] All right; I've got the hang.

MISS CARD. [*Down the tube*] Show the Press in, Whate.

SIR JOHN. Get out the deed and seal ready for the photograph. Cut along, Joan. You can't be in this. [MISS CARD *busies herself.*

JOAN. Why not? "Right: Sir John's pretty young daughter."

The door from the hall is opened, and the YOUNG JOURNALIST *enters.* JOAN *hovers at the window.*

SIR JOHN. How de do?

JOURNALIST. This is a great privilege, Sir John. I understand from the prospectus that this Coaline process is going to save the coal situation. Might I ask if that is true, or if it's—er—official?

SIR JOHN. You may grin, but it's both. I shall want to see what you write.

JOURNALIST. Certainly, Sir John.

SIR JOHN. Well! This Combine will cover ten districts—you can get their names from my secretary here—the Coaline process will be applied at the pit's mouth.

JOURNALIST. How many mouths would that be?

SIR JOHN. Er——

MISS CARD. [*As if to herself*] Sixty-fave.

SIR JOHN. [*Severely*] Sixty-six — er — or rather less.

JOURNALIST. Will that mean closing many more pits?

SIR JOHN. Yes.

JOURNALIST. How many?

MISS CARD. [*As if to herself*] Twelve.

SIR JOHN. Eleven—er—or rather more.

JOURNALIST. More miners will be thrown out, then? How many?

SIR JOHN. About—er——

MISS CARD. [*As if to herself*] Twenty thousand.

SIR JOHN. Impossible to say exactly.

JOURNALIST. And *their* mouths——

SIR JOHN. Eh?

JOURNALIST. Might I have your views on what ought to be done for them?

SIR JOHN. What! That's for the Government. We're only concerned with making the coal industry pay again in this country. We're out to put coal back on an efficient basis. The essence of Combines [*Stealing a look at his note-book, and not finding the right place*] is—er—er—more power of putting the fear of God into people. Don't *say* that!

JOURNALIST. [*Writing*] A more authoritative position in regard to machinery, workers, middlemen, and consumers?

SIR JOHN. That's what it comes to.

JOURNALIST. Good for Big Business, and bad for everybody else.

SIR JOHN. Eh!—er—Well! Put it nicely.

JOURNALIST. That'll be all right, Sir John. I'll translate it. And you are to be Chairman?

SIR JOHN *nods.*

May I touch on your other activities?

SIR JOHN. Malayan Rubber; National Asphalt, and Coal Tar Corporation; my secretary here can

give you the others—so many of the confounded things. [*A discreet whistle is heard.*

MISS CARD. [*Smothering it and speaking into the tube*] Yes. Whate. . . . The photographah is heah, Sir John.

SIR JOHN. Let 'em all come.

JOURNALIST. The life of a king of industry like you, Sir, must be pretty strenuous. Do you ever get a rest?

SIR JOHN. Yes.

JOURNALIST. May I ask when?

SIR JOHN. When I'm being photographed.

MR EAST enters from the hall, bearing a camera.

SIR JOHN. How de do, Mr East? Got the guillotine, I see.

MR EAST. The process will be swift this morning, Sir John, the light is admirable.

SIR JOHN. [*Putting his hand up to his hair*] Excuse me a minute, then.

He crosses and goes into the hall. MR EAST *greets the* JOURNALIST, *and goes over to pitch his camera.*

MISS CARD. A should suggest at most a half-tame exposure.

JOAN. Why, Miss Card?

MISS CARD. A think Sir John maight go off the deep end this morning—he, he!

She gets out the seal. The JOURNALIST *writes in his note-book, and takes particulars from* MISS CARD.

JOAN. How's your dog, Mr East ?

MR EAST. The Vet has taken him. He says he can cure him.

JOAN. They always do.

MR EAST. That is true, I'm afraid. Am I to have the pleasure of making a portrait of you, Miss Mazer ?

JOAN. I hope so.

MR EAST. You like being photographed ?

JOAN. I adore it.

MR EAST. How frank ! So many people adore it who don't say so. Usually they *say* they prefer the dentist.

JOAN. Before or after ?

MR EAST. Before, *and* sometimes after. I am hoping to photograph lions in future.

JOAN. Here ?

MR EAST. In Africa.

JOAN. Wild lions ? That'll be simply marvellous.

MR EAST. The tame lion is somewhat trying.

JOAN. Yes, that's what's made him a lion.

MR EAST. I believe wild lions are singularly modest.

JOAN. It sounds frightfully sporting, but why are you running wild like this ?

MR EAST. I have had one or two misfortunes lately. The other day I was induced to photograph a baby for Balsopp's Bottles.

JOAN. But that's not fatal, is it ?

MR EAST. Unfortunately they had acquired the signature of a young lady, and they affixed it under my portrait of the baby, with the words, "My baby dotes on Balsopp's Bottles."

JOAN. I still don't see the crime.

MR EAST. No? You see, she wasn't married.

JOAN. Oh! That *was* a bit steep.

MR EAST. And it was a particularly hideous baby.

JOAN. D'you get many thrills like that?

MR EAST. I have recently had to make a series of pictures for a patent food called Vital. "Richard Bott, at six years old," a singularly wretched-looking child; then "Richard Bott after taking Vital, at six years and three months"; "Richard Bott at six years six months, after the continued use of Vital." I do so wish I could take Richard at seven years, showing the permanent results of Vital.

JOAN. Well, won't you?

MR EAST. I fear I shall not be allowed to photograph him in his coffin.

MISS CARD. He, he!

MR EAST. I believe lions have no patent foods.

JOAN. You'll be their first, Mr East.

MR EAST. I trust not, for their sakes. I am very tough.

JOAN. Are you going alone?

MR EAST. No—with Sir Charles Denbury.

JOAN. What! Is he going back there?

MR EAST. Unfortunately he is ruined.

JOAN. I know; but there are other ways. Why doesn't he marry, for instance?

MR EAST. For that I believe you require a lady.

JOAN. There are lots about.

MR EAST. Perhaps he does not care for any of them.

JOAN. That wouldn't matter at his age, if she had money and was young.

MR EAST. Do you know of someone like that?

JOAN [*Embarrassed by his gaze*] I say! Dad's taking his time, he must be putting some hair on.

MR EAST. The need does not usually arise till after I have said "Just one more!" four times.

MISS CARD. [*Having finished with the* JOURNALIST] Will you prefer Sir John to sit or to stand, Mr East? You will find him more intellectual sitting.

MR EAST. I shall not want his legs, if I may say so.

SIR JOHN. [*Re-entering*] What's the matter with my legs?

MR EAST. I have not discovered anything, Sir John. Only, with a king of industry I should prefer to concentrate on the cranium.

JOAN. He's thinking of your feet of clay, dear.

SIR JOHN. [*Sticking out his jaw*] Dash it! I'm not in the police.

MR EAST. I should like to stress the brain rather than the jaw, Sir John.

JOAN. Sit down and show your bumps, darling.

SIR JOHN *sits down, taking up sealing-wax.*

MISS CARD. [*Handing him the seal*] The seal, Sir John. Do you wish for realism? Shall A laight the candle?

MR EAST. If you could hold that for a minute. [*Retires under black cloth.*]

SIR JOHN. [*Composing his expression.*] Sing out when you're ready. How's that, Miss Card?

MISS CARD. Psachologically, I think, raight, Sir John. Perhaps, a little smale?

JOAN. You're frowning, Dad.

SIR JOHN. Good Gad! [*Grins*] That do?

MR EAST [*Energized*] That is a little too hilarious. If I might know on what transaction you are setting the seal, Sir John?

SIR JOHN. Well, it affects about sixty-five thousand people.

MR EAST. Could I get that expression on your face?

SIR JOHN *modifies his face.*

MR EAST. Thank you. If I may say so, the transaction is now affecting about fifty-two thousand people. I should be sorry to miss out the others.

JOURNALIST. Does the sixty-five thousand include the twenty thousand that'll be thrown out of work, Sir John?

JOAN. Yes, you want to throw in a spot of sorrow, Dad.

SIR JOHN. [*Dumping down the seal*] Now, how the deuce am I to—sit—to pose—if—if—Joan, go away! And you, young man, kindly curb your curiosity.

JOURNALIST. I'm very sorry, Sir.

SIR JOHN *takes up the seal again, but he is now scowling heavily.*

JOAN. [*Sotto voce*] Good practice for the lions, Mr East.

MR EAST. [*Greatly embarrassed*] If I might suggest —thinking of something pleasant——

SIR JOHN. Well, what?

MISS CARD. Oysters, Sir John. Oh! dear! He, he! It's May. [SIR JOHN'S *expression wobbles.*

MR EAST. Admirable! [*He shoots*] May I take just *one* more?

JOAN. Can't *I* be in this? I could be handing you the seal, Dad.

MISS CARD. The Public would love the human touch, Sir John.

SIR JOHN. Damn the Public!

MISS CARD. Quate!

JOURNALIST. I thought, Sir, it was the Public you wanted to reach. Otherwise, I mean to say, why have a photograph at all?

JOAN. If I'm in it they won't be able to confuse you with the Prime Minister receiving the freedom of Peebles, Dad.

SIR JOHN. I don't know where the reverence of the young is. Here, take the seal!

JOAN. [*Taking it*] Now, Mr East?

MR EAST. [*To* JOAN] Your head a little to one side, as if wondering what you were doing.

JOAN. I see. Whimsical. D'you want Dad whimsical too?

MR EAST. If Sir John were reaching for the seal, with his mind fixed on the state of England. Your eyes straight into the camera, Sir John. It will give you a look of benevolent anxiety. Miss Joan, if you would think of a "Present from Blackpool"—the head a leetle—perfectly still for one second. [*Replaces cap*] Thank you so much. May I take just *one* more?

SIR JOHN. No.

JOAN. Oh! come on, Dad.

SIR JOHN. I will not.

JOAN. Then come and take me, Mr East, on the terrace. [*A low whistle from the tube.*

MISS CARD. Yes, What? . . . Sir Charles Denbury, Sir John.

SIR JOHN. Denbury? I don't know what he wants.

JOAN. I do.

SIR JOHN. What?

JOAN. He said he was coming to ask you to do something for the miners at Bableigh.

SIR JOHN. In that case, I don't want to see him.

MISS CARD. Shall A say you are indisposed, Sir John; or shall I merely tell him the truth?

SIR JOHN. The truth? Of course not!

MISS CARD. Quate! I will lay to him.

Goes towards the door to the hall.

JOAN. You *must* be civil, Dad; after all, we're his Jacobs——

SIR JOHN. His what?

JOAN. We supplanted him here. Besides, he's perfectly charming; and he's just had the most monstrous luck.

SIR CHARLES *enters from the hall*

JOURNALIST. [*To* SIR JOHN] If you'll excuse me, Sir, I'll be going. [*To* MISS CARD] You'll let me have the photographs.

He greets SIR CHARLES *in passing, and goes out into the hall.*

SIR JOHN. [*Rising*] How are you, Denbury? Sorry to hear about your mare.

SIR CHARLES. Thank you. How are you?

SIR JOHN. Overworked—otherwise bobbish.

SIR CHARLES. [*Nodding to* MR EAST, *who is at the*

French window, lowering with his camera] Ah! Mr East; been practising?

JOAN. The lion in his den. Mr East has great courage, Sir Charles; he's just going to shoot me. [*Her demeanour is somewhat arch.*]

SIR CHARLES. [*Drily*] How exciting!

MISS CARD. He, he!

MR EAST. If when you have finished your conversation. I might take just one more, Sir John, in case the expression should turn out a little too fierce.

SIR JOHN. Well, well—if you must.

MR EAST *goes out on to the terrace, followed by* JOAN.

MISS CARD. [*At the table*] The manner has brought the bulldogs, Sir John. Shall A detain him?

SIR JOHN. Yes, yes.

She goes out into the hall.

Now, Denbury! Sit down, won't you? [SIR CHARLES *sits.*] You remember this room, I suppose?

SIR CHARLES. I had thirty-six years of it.

SIR JOHN. I like the place, you know. But I've had to spend the deuce of a lot of money on it, one way and another.

SIR CHARLES. Yes, I'm afraid we did let it down towards the end.

SIR JOHN. You were—er—you were hard hit.

SIR CHARLES. Well, I had a grandfather. And then with my father dying three years after him, the double duties finished us off. You've got some pretty useful men of business up there. [*Pointing at the busts.*]

SIR JOHN. [*Presenting Julius Cæsar*] Yes. That one of George Washington's good.

SIR CHARLES. [*With a smile*] What a queer likeness to Julius Cæsar!

SIR JOHN. [*Impervious*] Eh? What's that? About your mare, Denbury? Who put that ruffian up to it?

SIR CHARLES. [*Looking at him intently*] Couldn't get it out of him. Well, your horse will win now. I should have beaten you—my mare ran a wonderful trial.

SIR JOHN. Shocking luck! Shocking!

SIR CHARLES. Ye-es. Means exile for me—going back to Africa for keeps. But I came to see you about the miners at Bableigh.

SIR JOHN. [*Defensively*] What about them?

SIR CHARLES. Eight hundred of 'em, as stranded as myself.

SIR JOHN. [*Impatiently*] If there were eight thousand, I can't help it. That pit was a regular sink. There was nothing for it but to cut it out.

SIR CHARLES. It's damned hard on those fellows and their families.

SIR JOHN. It's a damned hard world, Denbury.

SIR CHARLES. Except for the Brass Pots.

SIR JOHN. That's it—they swim because they're hard. This coal business has been tinkered with long enough. We've simply *got* to cut our losses.

SIR CHARLES. Your losses and their lives.

SIR JOHN. What can I do? There's no getting round it, we must have a paying basis.

SIR CHARLES. Evolution! It's the devil!

SIR JOHN. Well, what's your remedy? You're not a Socialist.

SIR CHARLES. No; but even Big Business isn't entitled to scrap human beings wholesale.

SIR JOHN. It's the whole hog or nothing, in these times.

SIR CHARLES. [*Shrugging*] You don't mind what people say of you, I take it?

SIR JOHN. Not a kick.

SIR CHARLES. That's lucky. By the way, I passed that tramp just now, turning into your drive. I wondered if he were coming to see you.

SIR JOHN. *Me!*

SIR CHARLES. [*Switching off*] You don't feel you can do anything for those miners, then?

SIR JOHN. [*With a shrug*] It's up to the Government. We can't carry eight hundred families on our backs. Losing our capital's bad enough.

As he speaks JOAN *enters through the open French window. A low whistle comes from the tube.*

SIR JOHN. [*Rising and taking it up*] Yes! . . . All right. Shall you be seeing the Cup, Denbury?

SIR CHARLES. No. You named your horse well, Mazer—Evolution first, the rest nowhere.

SIR JOHN. Let's hope so! Excuse me a minute, I've got to see those bulldogs. Joan, look after Sir Charles. [*He walks out into the hall.*

SIR CHARLES *has also risen, and turned towards the young woman, who comes down.*

JOAN. Pretty rotten for you, seeing other people here!

SIR CHARLES. Happily one seldom speaks the truth.

JOAN. If *I'd* lost an old family place, I should never rest until I'd got it back.

SIR CHARLES. What would you try—murder?

JOAN. [*With a quick look*] No—marriage.

SIR CHARLES. I see. Unluckily, the more the money, the shyer I should fight.

JOAN. But that's frightfully unpractical.

SIR CHARLES. We all have our weak points, Miss Mazer.

JOAN. What was this room in your day?

SIR CHARLES. A sort of sanctum.

JOAN. I see; nice and messy.

SIR CHARLES. Every mortal thing.

JOAN. Books?

SIR CHARLES. Yes, but read.

JOAN. [*Nodding*] These are stumers. We had them laid on. Dad *can* read, but he hasn't time.

SIR CHARLES. And you?

JOAN. Oh! I've got time, but I can't read.

SIR CHARLES. Not novels?

JOAN. Novels bore me to tears—except bloods, of course, about the "body" and all that. By the way, did you think me too terrible for wanting to see that tar and feathering?

SIR CHARLES. Oh, no! It seemed very natural. Sensation's the rule of the road now, isn't it?

JOAN. I suppose you don't think much of the modern girl?

SIR CHARLES. [*Politely*] Oh! Well! I don't understand her, of course.

JOAN. You don't *want* to understand her.

SIR CHARLES. Not *very* much, perhaps.

JOAN. That's not fair. You ought. She's a perfectly natural product.

SIR CHARLES. With slight additions?

JOAN. [*Touching her lips and cheeks*] Well! we don't wear bustles, anyway. What don't you understand about us?

SIR CHARLES. What you're after.

JOAN. I'll tell you—it's a great secret—A good time. But I suppose you were brought up to think men should have a good time, and women shouldn't.

SIR CHARLES. Hardly so crude as that. No! My suspicion is that we, none of us, get a good time if we're after it.

JOAN. What *would* you go after, then?

SIR CHARLES. You have me—ask a moralist.

JOAN. Aren't you one?

SIR CHARLES. Not much!

JOAN. Oh! I thought that was just the difference between us.

SIR CHARLES. Well, perhaps a belief or two still hangs about my generation.

JOAN. I suppose you're bitter because you're exiled.

SIR CHARLES. [*Good-temperedly*] There's more than one kind of exile, Miss Mazer.

JOAN. Meaning the modern girl—no beliefs, no morals?

SIR CHARLES. [*Shrugging*] That's for you to judge.

JOAN. Look here! When you were a gay young spark I bet you thought you were a devil of a fellow, and were proud of it. Well, when *we* go gay we don't think we're devils of fellows, so we can't be proud of it. And that's all the difference.

SIR CHARLES. Very shrewd, young lady.

JOAN. What's the good of morals and beliefs? What do they lead to? Tell me that! I mean if you want me to go somewhere you must tell me why.

SIR CHARLES *shrugs his shoulders.*

The face of the TRAMP, *unseen, peers in at the shut French window, and withdraws itself.*

JOAN. No. You're not going to get out of it. If I want a thing, why shouldn't I have it? One can be certain about what one wants, anyway.

SIR CHARLES. Until one's got it.

JOAN. Now, honestly, [*Looking at him intently*] if you saw a thing you really wanted, would you let scruples, or good form, or whatever you call it, stand in the way of your getting it?

SIR CHARLES. Yes, and so would you.

JOAN. Would I? You've been too long in Africa. You simply mustn't go back.

SIR CHARLES. My dear young lady, I have no money, and, consequently, no choice.

JOAN. I say you have. You've only to—— Oh, well! While you're here, would you like to look into the other rooms, and see how beautifully we've spoiled *them*, too. [*She goes towards the door into the drawing-room.*]

SIR CHARLES. [*Following*] Thank you. It may be sentimental, but I should. [*They go out.*

The door is scarcely shut when the figure of the TRAMP *passes the shut French window, looking in; then comes to the open French window, and stands there darkening the sunlight. At this moment* SIR JOHN *comes back into the room from the hall.*

SIR JOHN. Hallo! What the—— ?

TRAMP. Can I get a word with you, Guv'nor ?

SIR JOHN. What d'you mean by coming round here—instead of—— ?

TRAMP. [*Stopping in*] Well, I put it to you—if I 'adn't come round, should I 'ave got a word with you ?

SIR JOHN. No; and you won't now.

TRAMP. Excuse me, Guv'nor, but wot I've got to say is worth your listenin' to.

SIR JOHN. Are you the chap who lamed that mare ?

TRAMP. Yes; luckily for you.

SIR JOHN. You confounded blackguard!

TRAMP. 'Ere, Guv'nor, considerin' what you stand to win by what I did——

SIR JOHN. Get out of here!

TRAMP. No, no! You 'aven't got the 'ang of it. You don't know what they're sayin' about you.

SIR JOHN. What the devil do you mean ?

TRAMP. Well! You bein' unpopular and ownin' the favourite, there's some goin' about already sayin' it was you put me up to that job.

SIR JOHN. What!

TRAMP. And wot I can't see is why I should trouble to deny it, unless it's made worth my while. Slip me a tenner quiet, an' I'll deny it till I 'aven't a squeak left in me.

SIR JOHN. You impudent ruffian!

TRAMP. It's worth it, Guv'nor—mud sticks. You're not the miners' pet, you know. There's a good few round 'ere wantin' your blood, along o' closin' pits.

SIR JOHN. [*Taking up the tube.*] I'm going to have the police called.

TRAMP. Won't do, Guv'nor. This ain't blackmail. I've just come to let you know I'm not goin' out o' my way unless it's made worth my while. What's it to me what they think about you? The worse they think of you the better I shall like it.

SIR JOHN. What made you lame that mare?

TRAMP. That's tellin, Guv'nor. You can't do nothin' to me; so you'd better make the best o' me. You've hit a nasty snag, I tell you.

SIR JOHN. I don't believe a word you're saying. Suspecting *me*! Moonshine!

TRAMP. Well, see for yourself this afternoon. There'll be a lot o' miners at the races. [*He turns to go; then turning back*] If you want me, Guv'nor, when you've thought it over, blow your dog whistle. I'll be be'ind those bushes.

He turns abruptly and slips out of the window.

SIR JOHN. [*To himself*] Infernal ruffian! [*Taking up the tube*] Hi! Has Sir Charles Denbury gone?

. . . What ? . . . And Mr East ? . . . Ask them both to come back here. [*Enter* Miss Card What is it, Miss Card, what is it ?

Miss Card. The bulldogs, Sir John.

Sir John. They must stand over.

Miss Card. [*With an ill-advised and terribly refined facetiousness*] They rather do, don't they ? Quate marvellously bow-legged, pooah darlings ! He, He !

Sir John. Blast the bulldogs !

Miss Card. [*Frozen*] Quate. Is the maner who brought them to wait ?

Sir John. Yes.

Miss Card. Is anything the mattah, Sir John ?

Sir John. Yes—no—why ?

Miss Card. A only thought——

Sir John. Well, don't !

Miss Card. Quate. [*She turns to the table and fills his pipe.*]

Sir John has gone restlessly to the open window, and stands glaring out of it. Sir Charles, *followed by* Mr East *and* Joan, *enter from the hall.*

Sir John. [*Turning abruptly*] Look here, Denbury —about your mare ?

Sir Charles. Yes ?

Sir John. Go away, Joan : and you too, Miss Card.

Miss Card. Your pape, Sir John.

She hands him the pipe, and a box of matches, then goes. Joan *sits down in her father's chair behind the table.*

SIR JOHN. D'you hear me, Joan ?

JOAN. [*Unmoving*] Who wouldn't, dear ?

SIR CHARLES. What about my mare ?

SIR JOHN. Have you heard any gossip ?

SIR CHARLES. Ask the miner who brought those dogs here.

SIR JOHN. Why ?

SIR CHARLES. It's among the miners that the gossip runs.

SIR JOHN. They'd better be careful. Have *you* heard any gossip, Mr East ?

MR EAST. Not yet, Sir John ; but Nunchester is a cathedral city, if I may say so.

SIR JOHN. Um ! [*Turning impatiently to* SIR CHARLES] Now, Denbury, spit it out !

SIR CHARLES. Very well. It seems the miners in Babbeigh are saying that you put that trumpery [illegible] laming my mare.

JOAN. [*Springing up*] Oh !

SIR CHARLES. Exactly !

SIR JOHN *is in such a passion that he cannot speak.*

You must remember that you're in bad odour there.

SIR JOHN. The swine ! [*Striding across to the tube and blowing into it*] Bring that miner fellow here.

SIR CHARLES. He's a very good chap, Jo Hodgkin.

SIR JOHN. Is he ? The most monstrous—the most outrageous—— !

MR EAST. If I might venture, Sir John ——

SIR JOHN. Don't put your oar in.

MR EAST. I *seem* to have caught a crab.

SIR JOHN. In all my life——

JOAN. [*Sitting again*] Don't get rattled, Dad. As if anybody in their senses——

SIR JOHN turns to the window.

MR EAST. [*Very softly*] "The heathen rage furiously together, and the people imagine a vain thing."

SIR JOHN. [*Turning*] What's that?

MR EAST. A psalm, Sir John!

SIR JOHN. Blast!

Enter MISS CARD *followed by* HODGKIN, *who obviously trails the bulldogs.*

MISS CARD. The maner, Sir John.

SIR JOHN. Leave those dogs outside.

MISS CARD. A will take them, pooah darlings.

She takes the lead and disappears.

HODGKIN. Eh, Mr East. Ah've told ma Missis about your offer to take a picture of 'er. She's composin' 'er faace already.

SIR JOHN. What have you and your mates been saying about me?

HODGKIN. Ah've said noothin'.

SIR JOHN. Oh! *You've* not, but *they* have. Well, what?

HODGKIN. Ah never tell tales.

SIR JOHN. Sir Charles Denbury says that some of you are going about saying that I procured the laming of his mare. Is that true?

HODGKIN. Ah've 'eard soomthing like it.

SIR JOHN. D'you believe the foul lie?

HODGKIN. If Ah'd believed it, Ah wouldn' want ma dawgs to associate with ye.

SIR JOHN. Is this because I closed your pit ?

HODGKIN. Wha ! Ye're not joost Bableigh's bonny boy, Sir John.

SIR JOHN. You know perfectly well we were losing money hand over fist.

HODGKIN. That's as mebbe ; but when men are stagnated like us, 'tis yunkat nature to squint a bit. Try goin' without your Sunday dinner, try seein' yer daughter there in split boots, ye'll not see ta man that cut ta brass off too straight-like.

SIR JOHN. Between that and spreading a bad lie——

HODGKIN. 'Tis your misfortune yi've put ta favourite for ta Coop. If your 'orse wins this afternoon, there'll be a proper 'ullabaloo on the coorse.

SIR JOHN. D'you really mean to tell me that your mates can be such blood-thirsted fools as to think I'd have truck with a filthy tramp, to lame a horse ?

HODGKIN. [*Nodding*] Ah ! There's soom of us'll believe anything of a man in your position. Ah'll speak frank—you've been one of the get-rich-quick, Sir John. You're a 'ard man 'o business. Now, Sir Charles 'ere—we'd noon of us believe sooch a thing against 'im. Wha ? Becos we know 'e can't take care of 'issen. 'Is grandfather was rich when yours was a workin' man like me. An' look where Sir Charles is now—stagnated, an' got to live in Afriky. There's no Noomber One with Sir Charles.

SIR CHARLES. Thank you for nothing, Hodgkin.

HODGKIN. [*To* SIR JOHN] But there's little Sir John Mazer'll stick at in the opinion o' those 'e've a-chucked into the gutter.

SIR JOHN. It's some Bolshy brute among them. How did they get this monstrous notion into their heads? Did that tramp——

HODGKIN. Ye'd find it 'ard to trace a thing lik' thaat. Soomone maybe says: "Well, 'oo stood to win by't?" Anoother says: "Well, Mazer!" Anoother says: "Ah! that old blue-bottle!"—if the young lady'll excuse me—"E'd stick at noothin'." Then the next man says: "'Ave ye 'eard about Mazer?" An' so't goes round. Ah do a bit of thinkin', ah can see things oothers can't. D'ye want to buy ma dawgs, Sir John?

SIR JOHN. I want to buy nothing till I've knocked this on the head.

HODGKIN. 'Twon't be easy. Men's thoughts are their own, an' s'os tha tongues. Think an' talk; they've little else to do in Bableigh.

SIR JOHN. Then I'll treat it with contempt, like the gutter-stuff it is.

HODGKIN. Ah! but ah woodn't go to the Races.

SIR JOHN. I damned well will!

HODGKIN. [*Ironically*] That's ta stoof to give 'em! Well, ah'll be takin' ma dawgs back. Coomin', Mr East? Ah'd like to show 'em to ye; they'd be the boys to tackle a lion in Afriky.

Saluting SIR CHARLES *but not* SIR JOHN, *he goes out into the hall.*

JOAN. What does it matter, Dad? People are always thinking the worst of other people. Who cares about a few disgruntled miners?

SIR JOHN. Be quiet! Denbury, you're a man of the world—what do you say?

SIR CHARLES. Rumour travels at race meetings as it does in an African forest.

SIR JOHN. Is there any way I can stop it?

SIR CHARLES. I believe the miners' char-a-bancs start from the "Rose and Nettle" at noon. [*Looks at his watch.*] It's just that now. You might catch them, you can get there in five minutes.

SIR JOHN. See the brutes?

SIR CHARLES. If that's the way you regard them —no.

SIR JOHN. Well! How would you look on men who believed a thing like that about you?

SIR CHARLES. If you could get hold of that tramp——

SIR JOHN. He's out there. [*Pointing.*]

SIR CHARLES. What! Have you—seen him?

SIR JOHN. [*Shrinks.*] Yes: the barefaced ruffian wants paying to deny it.

SIR CHARLES. [*Dubiously*] H'm!

SIR JOHN. [*Recovering his line.*] By Gad, Denbury, if I thought that you——

JOAN. [*Quickly*] Dad! What utter nonsense!

SIR CHARLES. [*With a little bow to her*] Thank you, Miss Mazer, I couldn't have put it better myself.

SIR JOHN. Sorry! I'm—I'm rattled. Suppose they do hoot my horse. You know the ropes, what d'you say?

SIR CHARLES. [*With a shrug*] Those who know

you won't believe, or—will, according to what your dealings with them may have been. As to the rest: responsible people won't believe it, but it always tickles the groundlings to believe the worst about a rich man.

SIR JOHN. Hell! It's fantastic.

SIR CHARLES. Get hold of that tramp and see the miners. I'll come too, if you like, to show there's no ill feeling.

JOAN. That's terribly sweet of you.

SIR JOHN. [*Gruffly*] Thanks! Thanks! I'll get that brute in. [*He takes a dog whistle from his pocket and blows it.*]

SIR CHARLES. Take Mr East, he's a good man in a tight place.

The TRAMP *has appeared in the window.* SIR CHARLES *turns his back on him.*

TRAMP. Well, Guv'nor?

SIR JOHN. I'm going to see the miners, and you're coming too.

TRAMP. Cash before delivery, Guv'nor. I'll want the money first.

SIR JOHN. What! I don't trust you a yard!

TRAMP. Same 'ere, Guv'nor; and I got a need for that money.

SIR JOHN. Need? What d'you mean, need?

TRAMP. It's a private matter, but I don't mind tellin' 'im. [*Pointing to* MR EAST.] He can do the job for me. I'll want 'im to go to prison.

MR EAST. If you'll excuse me I should prefer to commit my own crimes.

TRAMP. Nao, nao! It's just to pay a fine for a third party.

MR EAST *crosses to him.* . . . JOAN *takes up the speaking-tube.*

JOAN. White. . . . The Rolls Royce at once. And please bring an old Burberry and a cap. [*To* MR EAST] The Ford's still out there, Mr East: you'd want it if you're going to the prison.

MR EAST. Thank you, it would be highly suitable.

SIR JOHN *crosses, and goes into the hall.*

JOAN. [*To* SIR CHARLES] I wouldn't have missed this for worlds.

SIR CHARLES. Oh! Why?

JOAN. I simply love seeing fur fly.

SIR CHARLES *shrugs.*

Is that very cynical?

SIR CHARLES. Very.

JOAN. Well, *you* needn't worry—you're scratch-proof.

MISS CARD *comes in bearing a Burberry and fishing hat. She is followed shortly after by* SIR JOHN.

MISS CARD. [*To the* TRAMP] A think you may lake to put these on.

TRAMP. That's right, Miss. I'd be sorry to disgrace a Rolls Royce. [*He puts them on, squashing his own battered cap into a pocket.*]

MISS CARD. You will faind the chauffeur with the Rolls at the front door.

MR EAST. He requires ten pounds, Sir John. The object is laudable, if I may say so.

SIR JOHN. Ruffian! Here you are! [*Handing* MR EAST *a ten-pound note.*] Take the Ford.

MR EAST. Thank you! I will do what he wants, and join you at the "Rose and Nettle." Do you mind if I give Mr Hodgkin's dogs a lift, Sir John?

SIR JOHN. You may give a lift to the devil, if you like.

MISS CARD. He, he!

MR EAST. [*To the* TRAMP] You trust me with the ten pounds?

TRAMP. Yes, you're a yuman bein'.

MR EAST. That is a proud distinction, if I may say so.

SIR CHARLES. [*Suddenly turning*] I'm not too damned sure of that.

MR EAST *and the* TRAMP *go out by the French window.*

JOAN. Who's cynical now? [*To* SIR JOHN] You'll take me, Dad?

SIR JOHN. I will not. [*He goes towards the hall, followed by* MISS CARD.]

JOAN. [*To his back as he goes out*] I'm afraid you will, dear. [*To* SIR CHARLES] A very mild animal really, the British bulldog.

They are following out as

The CURTAIN *falls*

ACT III

ACT III

SCENE I

A few min. utes later. The scene is again the bar and billiard-room of the "Rose and Nettle" Inn.

The BARMAN *is at work behind his bar.* JOAN, *followed by the* TRAMP, *enters from the hall. She goes over to the hearth, where she fiddles with a cue which is resting there. The* TRAMP *stands by the billiard-marking machine.*

BARMAN. [*Alarmed*] Excuse me, Miss, you're not goin' to play billiards with 'im?

JOAN. [*Laughing and putting down the cue*] No. It's all right. My father'll be here in a minute. He wants to see the miners.

BARMAN. They've gone aboard the char-a-bangs. To get a miner off a char-a-bang's like gettin' toffee off a tooth.

JOAN. Sir Charles is performing the operation. [*To the* TRAMP] Have you had any breakfast?

TRAMP. No.

JOAN. I say! [*To* BARMAN] Could you get him a cup of coffee and a sandwich?

The BARMAN *hesitates, then goes.*

Where are you going to sleep to-night?

TRAMP. Under the stars. But don't mention it, lidy.

JOAN. Why not ?

TRAMP. There's a predijuce against it.

JOAN. Why, it's the one thing I envy you !

TRAMP. [*Sardonically*] Eggsactly. That's what I say—it's their jealousy.

JOAN. D'you mean they won't let you ?

TRAMP. Not if they know it.

JOAN. Why not ?

TRAMP. It excites [illegible] that.

JOAN. What a shame !

TRAMP. Quite right, Miss !

SIR JOHN *enters from the hall, followed by the* INNKEEPER, *and walks over to the hearth. The* INNKEEPER *advances in front of the bar.* JOAN *sits in the armchair above the hearth.*

SIR JOHN. [*Before the hearth*] D'you get the miners' custom *here* ?

INNKEEPER. No. The "Red Lion's" their house.

SIR JOHN. Heard the outrageous rumour they're putting about ?

INNKEEPER. [*Coming forward*] Well. Babbeigh's a little place, Sir John.

SIR JOHN. You were at Luxford 'All Hall once, weren't you ?

INNKEEPER. Yes, and me father before me, and his father. I left when it was sold to you.

SIR JOHN. Um. D'*you* think I've treated the miners here badly ?

INNKEEPER. [*Sturdily*] As you ask me, I do.

SIR JOHN. Oh! You hold your farm from me.—D'you pay for labour that you don't need? No! And even then you don't make your rent, or so you say.

Fortunately for the INNKEEPER *at this moment the* BARMAN *re-enters with fodder for the* TRAMP, *who takes it and sits on the end of the window-seat, eating.*

BARMAN. They're comin' up the garden.

INNKEEPER. Bring 'em in through the window, George.

The BARMAN *goes out through the French window.*

SIR JOHN. [*Pursuing his offensive*] You'd like your farm subsidised by the State, perhaps?

INNKEEPER. No, Sir John, no. I don't hold with Socialism.

SIR JOHN. And yet you blame me when I try to make my concerns pay their own way. Oh! well—there are lots like you. The country's crammed with them. Shallow-pated——!

SIR CHARLES *has appeared at the French window. The* TRAMP *swigs off his coffee and moves away to the bar, where he stands wolfing his sandwich and edging towards the hearth side.*

JOAN. [*Sotto voce*] Now, Dad, don't go off the deep end! Think of the House of Lords!

SIR CHARLES. [*To the* MINERS] Shall we come in?

The troop of MINERS *comes in. All those,*

except HODGKIN, *who were present before, and four others:* GOFFER, *a thin, dry, grey-haired man with a lawyer-like gift of the gab; a saturnine, moustached fellow; a pale and emaciated man with a short beard as from illness; and a young fellow, very red in the face, with his hair sticking up in spikes. All are in their Sunday best for the races. They fill the recess, overflowing almost to the edge of the billiard table, and stare at* SIR JOHN, *who returns the stare with interest.* SIR CHARLES *crosses below the table to the fireside.*

SIR JOHN. I hear you've been good enough to suggest that I bribed this fellow here to lame Sir Charles Denbury's mare.

There is no answer from the MINERS.

So you daren't say it to my face? Come on; out with it! I want to know whom to proceed against for slander.

TULLEY. Best proceed against the lot of us, Sir John—tha'st not left too much money in Baldeigh.

SIR JOHN. It's right down cowardly to spread such a report behind a man's back; and you'll just damn well stop it.

JOAN. [*Sotto voce*] Dad, the House of Lords!

GOFFER. Ye can't stop men thinkin'.

SIR JOHN. I can stop them talking, and I will.

MITCHELL. Try it.

SIR JOHN. You know you none of you believe it. Ask this fellow to my face.

GOFFER. What's ta good o' that in a poot-oop job?

SIR JOHN. You be careful! [*To the* TRAMP, *who is leaning back against the middle of the bar*] Did I ever speak to you before this morning?

TRAMP. Yes.

SIR JOHN. What! Where?

TRAMP. In the Court yesterday, you give me a night cells for sleepin' out.

SIR JOHN. Oh! Wish I'd given you ten. Is that the only time?

TRAMP. Yes.

SIR JOHN. Will you swear that?

TRAMP. I will.

CLARKE. Will ye swear no brass 'as passed between ye?

TRAMP. [*With a grin*] I'll swear that too.

MITCHELL. Easy sworn.

SIR CHARLES. [*Quietly*] This is a wild notion, my friends. It wasn't in your heads an hour ago.

TULLEY. Art tha satisfied thissen, Sir Charles?

SIR CHARLES. Of course I'm satisfied, Tulley.

TULLEY. What Sir Charles says goes for me. 'Twas 'is mare. If Sir Charles is satisfied, that's enoof. [*Murmuring from some of the* MEN.

SIR JOHN. The whole thing is spite, because I closed your pit.

MITCHELL. Ah! And wha did ye close it? We never 'ad no reasons given us. Ye chucked us on the scrap'eap wi'out a word.

SIR JOHN. It didn't pay—you know that as well as I do.

GASCOYNE. Ye should have managed better, then. Ye've got wages down, ye've got ta eight-hour day. 'Tis just bad management.

SIR JOHN. Bosh!

GOFFER. That's it. Ye tak' our livin' from us, an' when we open our mouths, ye answer "Bosh!" I tell ye this: if ye think ye've got the right these days to scrap 'undreds of men, women, and children, without so mooch as "By your leave," ye make a big mistake.

SIR JOHN. Now we're getting down to it. I say I have the right. It's the only way to put industry on its legs again.

TULLEY. What's tha say to that, Sir Charles?

SIR CHARLES. It's the question we're all faced with these days, Tulley, and it's devilish hard to answer.

GASCOYNE. Well, if you'd been in Sir John Mazer's place, would ye 'ave closed ta pit and stagnated one an' all, without givin' us a say in it?

SIR CHARLES. No, I would not. Sooner than that I'd have given you the pit.

CLARKE. Ah! that's talkin'. Given us ta pit. An' wha not? Now ta water's in, 'tis gone for ever. We'd 'a saved ta pit we would 'aat. Ah! and made it pay.

SIR JOHN. [*Grimly*] I'd like to have seen you.

GOFFER. Then wha didn't ye give us the chance?

SIR JOHN. Because I don't believe in Labour running things.

GOFFER. Fact is, ye don't believe in anything but yissen. What's it to you if we've nowt before us?

SIR JOHN. You've got the dole; and you've got the rates.

GOFFER. Ah! An' would we if you and your laikes 'ad your way? Missen 'card you say the dole was ruinin' the coontry.

SIR JOHN. Well, you've got the Government.

GOFFER. Shall Ah tell thee what Goovernment in England is? 'Tis joost shuttin' ta stable door after t' 'oss is stolen.

SIR CHARLES. [*To* SIR JOHN] We don't seem to be getting on, exactly.

SIR JOHN. Now, look here. I can't help the mess the country's in. I didn't make the war, or alter the whole conditions of industry. If the workman's standard of living is higher here than it is abroad, it's not my doing.

MITCHELL *and* CLARKE. [*Jeering*] Ba Goom! . . . Ye're right there!

SIR JOHN. I'm not responsible for the coal strikes.

MITCHELL *and* GASCOYNE. Lock-outs! . . . Oh! Ma mistaak.

SIR JOHN. [*Boring on*] It's not my fault that there are a million too many people in England. I do my job, and my job is to make what industry I control pay its way; and I say that's the only thing that can do *you* good in the long run.

TULLEY. 'Tis a main long run, Sir John.

SIR JOHN. I'm sorry for you, devilish sorry. But if I said so, you wouldn't believe it.

CLARKE. We know ye too well. Ye just drive on, no matter 'oo you drive over.

SIR JOHN. That's all tommy rot. I'm as human as you.

MITCHELL. Ye don't advertise it, Mister.

GOFFER. Wha! Ye even named your 'orse "Evolution"! The weakest can go to the wall—for you. That's your rule o' the road. Well, coom to the races, and we'll rouse your 'orse for ye. Ma Goom! I'm lookin' forward to thaat.

SIR JOHN. [*Very angry*] Are you? Then you'll dashed well have nothing to look forward to. I'll scratch my horse first.

CLARKE. Ba Gosh! That's great. Eh, laads, we've poot the wind oop 'ee.

SIR JOHN. The wind be damned. I'll stop you venting your spite, that's all.

Laughter and jeers from the MINERS.

SIR CHARLES. Must this dog-fight go on? There's a lady present, men.

JOAN. Oh! don't worry about me—it's perfectly thrilling.

TEBBUTT. [*Slowly—he being the oldest, they listen*] When I was a young chap, Sir Charles, I mind your grandfather sayin': "Tebbutt, ye're as good a man as me. 'Tis queer," he said, "wha Providence made one man a miner and another a bar'net." What a pity he didna keep ta pits an' save all ta trooble.

SIR JOHN. [*Muttering*] Wish the deuce he had, then I shouldn't have lost *my* money trying to keep them open.

CLARKE. Did Providence give *you* yer title?

SIR JOHN. No, I bou—er—earned it. The only men

who can help this country to get on her feet again are men who'll look ahead and drive ahead. My father began as a working man; he looked ahead and drove ahead, too; and so have I; and if you think you're going to be any better off by getting rid of men like me, you're going balmy. [*He has cooled down during* TEBBUTT'S *speech, and adds with a sort of grim humour*] Fact is, you're balmy already.

MITCHELL. Aw! An' ah'll tell ye this: If there's many men like you, there's goin' to be a bloody time in England.

SIR JOHN. There we are! The Bolshy coming out! Try it, my man! Try it, and see!

SIR CHARLES. Steady, steady! We're not in Parliament.

CLARKE. How did this joker [*Pointing to the* TRAMP] come to be ridin' with you in a Rolls Royce? Tell us thaat.

SIR JOHN. I brought him from my place.

GOFFER. 'As 'e been stayin' with you?

SIR JOHN. [*Exploding*] Oh! Go to hell, the lot of you!

JOAN. [*Suddenly rising from her chair*] Just a second, before you go. Does my Dad *look* slim? He may be a trifle arbitrary, but does he look like doing the dirty on you?

SIR JOHN. Sit down, Joan.

GOFFER. Let 'im explain 'ow 'e come to 'ave 'is 'and on this fellow then.

TRAMP. [*Stirring suddenly*] See 'ere, fair play! Let me 'ave a fag and I'll tell you the 'ole bloomin'

story. [*A fag is handed him by the* BARMAN *from behind the bar: he lights it and hears his tale, which from the start rivets everyone's attention.*] It's like this: I 'ad larst night in choke for sleepin' out; and yesterday when I was up before the beaks, [*Pointing at* SIR JOHN] I see a woman that I used to know once on a time—I see 'er quodded for—for walkin' the stree—, for walkin' abaht—she 'adn't the money to pay 'er fine. Mazer there, 'e quodded 'er—Mazer. Well, I come out of choke this mornin' thinkin' o' things— [*His face has darkened*] thinkin' o' things. I took the road an' I come on a feller—close by 'ere—miner 'e was—an' we fell talkin'. We talked of 'ow things were 'ere, an' we talked o' Nunchester races; an' when we was passin' Luxford station, 'e says to me: "They'll be boxin' the 'orses in to-day from Luxford trainin' stables. Funny thing," 'e says, "we got the favourite for the Cup—'Evolution,' what belongs to Sir John Mazer, 'im that shut down the pits 'ere; but we got Flyin' Kite, too, wot's goin' to beat it; and won't that old blister Mazer be mad just? Shouldn't be surprised," 'e says, "if somethin' 'appened to Flyin' Kite. 'E'd stick at nothin', Mazer." Well, we come to the "Red Lion," and 'e stood me a double whisky. I'd an empty stomach, mind you. And when I come out I thought to meself: "Mazer! Why! that's the beak that quodded me and my—her I told you of; and she gone consump, if I got eyes. Mazer! So 'e owns the favourite, does 'e? We'll see about that." Well, I walked back to the station, and I see

an 'orse-box ready. I asked a bloke, an' 'e said 'twas for Mazer's 'orse. So I waited. I can't say what was in me mind exactly: what with the drink and thinkin', I was a bit light-'eaded. Well! Presently they brought the 'orse. Mazer's 'orse! And giv' you me word—I see the face of 'er—of 'er as used to be my wife—same as 'twas when Mazer quodded 'er. I see it clear as I see you; and I nicked a spanner from a motor-bike and ran and giv' the 'orse's leg a wipe—and made back for the bike. I can ride a bike with any man, but the blasted thing wouldn't click. So there I was. Speakin' in cold blood, I—I'm sorry I 'it the mare—as it turned aht, she was the other one's—not Mazer's at all. That's where the catch was. Things was upside down.

SIR CHARLES. My God!

TRAMP. After I left 'ere just now, I 'eard 'em through the winder of the "Red Lion" about suspectin' Mazer. So I went to see 'im about it. And that's all.

There is a silence when he has finished, broken at last by a deep grunt from SIR JOHN.

SIR JOHN. Well, you're a beauty!

SIR CHARLES. Why didn't you tell *me* all this just now?

TRAMP. [*Sullenly*] I 'ad my feelin's.

SIR JOHN. Worse luck for you than we thought, Denbury. Too bad! Look here, if my horse wins, I'll give my winnings to the village.

MITCHELL. We don't want your winnin's.

HODGKIN *enters from the hall.*

TULLEY. Eh, laad! Don't be 'asty. There's others beside yissen. 'Ere's Jo Hodgkin. Wot dost say, Jo?

HODGKIN. Wot's oop?

TULLEY. Sir John Mazer says he'll give 'is winnin's to the village.

HODGKIN. First catch your 'are. But that's the stoof. [*Stretching his hand across the table*] Shake 'ands, Sir John. [SIR JOHN *hesitates.*

JOAN. That's marvellous, Mr Hodgkin. [*Softly*] Don't back through your collar, Dad! Attaboy!

SIR JOHN *puts out his hand, which is overgrasped by* HODGKIN.

HODGKIN. [*Relishing his position*] We ought to 'ave Mr East take a picture o' this, Sir John. Should 'ave a record o' the Peace Treaty. [*Letting* SIR JOHN'S *mangled hand go with reluctance*] Well, coom on, lauds, time we was startin'. Coop's not room for every day.

As the MINERS *troop out into the hall, followed by the* INNKEEPER *and* BARMAN, MISS CARD *enters from the hall.*

SIR JOHN. Hallo, Miss Card—what's the matter?

MISS CARD. A just walked over, Sir John, to say that the superintendent of the casual wards has come and gone.

SIR JOHN. Why the hell didn't he wait?

MISS CARD. That was precasely the reason.

SIR JOHN. Reason? What? How d'you mean?

MISS CARD. He, he! The hell—was all he said, Sir John.

SIR JOHN. Eh! What? Ha!

MISS CARD. Quate!

SIR JOHN. Did you come over to tell me that?

MISS CARD. A thought perhaps in the circumstances you maight wish to go straight on to the races, Sir John. So a brought your glasses and another hat. [*She displays the two articles.*]

SIR JOHN. What's the matter with this hat? [*Waving his trilby.*]

MISS CARD. All the best people go racing in bowler hats.

SIR JOHN. Deuce they do! Miss Card, you're priceless.

MISS CARD. Cheap at the prace, Sir John, perhaps; but A shouldn't say praceless—he, he!

SIR JOHN. [*Turning to* SIR CHARLES, *who stands aloof by the lower armchair*] Can I take you in, Denbury?

SIR CHARLES. No. Thanks very much.

SIR JOHN. It really is sickening for you.

SIR CHARLES. [*With a wave of his hand*] Good luck to your horse!

SIR JOHN. [*Turning on the* TRAMP, *who has moved over to the window*] You dangerous brute! Wish I'd given you a month. You won't prosecute, Denbury?

SIR CHARLES. [*Shaking his head*] Dog doesn't eat dog.

SIR JOHN. What's that?

SIR CHARLES *shrugs his shoulders,* SIR JOHN, *after staring at him a moment, takes the hat from* MISS CARD.

Well, well! Let's be one of the best people. Coming,

Joan! [*He goes out into the hall, followed by* Miss Card.]

Joan. [*Sotto voce.*] How terribly Christian of you!

Sir Charles. Not at all! Just tribal feeling—one exile to another.

Joan. You don't mean you're really going back to Africa?

Sir Charles. Next week as ever is.

Joan. It's crazy!

Sir Charles. In what way, exactly?

Joan. [*Showing, for her, considerable embarrassment.*] Well—I mean... when the plums of your fathers and all that—is waiting to drop back into your mouth? I can't very well put it any plainer—can I?

Sir Charles. I don't venture to grasp your meaning.

Joan. Oh! yes, you do! [*Suddenly, and holding her hand out ever so little.*] I'm an only child, you know.

Sir Charles. [*Gratify.*] That is really most extraordinarily nice of you.

Joan. It isn't. It's brazen. Even I think it's brazen. But if you're going off to Africa——

Sir Charles. Alas!

Joan. [*In a hard voice.*] Oh! all right! If you don't know which side your bread's buttered.

Sir Charles. You heard Jo Hodgkin's opinion of me.

Joan. That you can't take care of yourself? I think he got it in once.

SIR CHARLES. [*Smiling*] In that case I'd better not add to my responsibilities, had I?

JOAN. No, but you might add to mine.

SIR CHARLES. Sorry, but it wouldn't be decent.

JOAN. Oh! Well, if you like to be a martyr! Good-bye!

She goes to the door, hesitates a moment, tosses her head and goes out into the hall.

SIR CHARLES, *who has watched her, gives a shrug and a faint whistle. The* TRAMP, *who is over at the French window chewing the butt end of his fag, comes forward a little as if to speak.* SIR CHARLES *stands staring at him.*

TRAMP. Guv'nor——

SIR CHARLES *deliberately turns his back on him.* Why, look 'ere, Guv'nor, you know I never meant to 'urt your 'orse. I'm sorry I 'it 'er—she was a pretty creature.

SIR CHARLES. [*Turning*] Let it go!

The TRAMP *makes a motion with his shoulders, slouches to the French window, hesitates, and goes out.*

He has barely disappeared when MR EAST, *followed by a* WOMAN, *comes from the commercial room. The* WOMAN *is about thirty-five, hollow-cheeked and hollow-eyed, with the remains of good looks under her indifferent make-up.*

MR EAST. [*To* SIR CHARLES] I thought our friend was still here, Sir Charles.

SIR CHARLES. Just gone. [*Looking with a certain alarm at the woman*] Shall I—er—um—send him to you?

MR EAST. If you would be so very good.

SIR CHARLES *crosses and goes out by the French window. The* WOMAN, *after staring round her, is warming herself at the fire.*

MR EAST. Are you cold after your drive?

WOMAN. Yes, I'm a bit chilly.

MR EAST. I trust the two bulldogs did not incommode you in the car?

WOMAN. No; I like dawgs. They're friendly things.

MR EAST. More friendly, I'm afraid, than human beings.

WOMAN. You're right.

MR EAST. Did you have an unpleasant time in—choke?

WOMAN. I've had worse.

MR EAST. You owe your release to an intervention of Providence, if I may say so.

WOMAN. Ah! I been wonderin' when you were goin' to start talkin' about salvation.

MR EAST. I'm afraid salvation is not in my line.

WOMAN. Why? Aren't you a missionary?

MR EAST. No. A photographer.

The WOMAN *stares.*

Photographers are full of original sin.

WOMAN. Don't you pull my leg. I don't feel like I could stand it.

MR EAST. Believe me, I am not trying to. [*Catching sight of the* TRAMP *in the garden*] Here is an old friend of yours, if I may so express it.

He goes out into the hall. The TRAMP *comes in at the French window, and the* WOMAN *and he stare at each other. Any surprise or emotion is checked by both.*

WOMAN. Why! It's Jack, ain't it? My Gawd! 'Ow are you, Jack?

TRAMP. Thereabouts. Well, 'ere we are again! 'Usband and wife! Heu! 'Ow are you, Milly?

WOMAN. As you see. Fancy seein' you again, Jack! Still in the motor mechanics?

TRAMP. *Nommuch.*

WOMAN. Beard don't suit you, Jack.

TRAMP. Nao. You didn't reckernise me in the Court yesterday, but I got your phiz all right.

WOMAN. [*Defiantly*] It's changed a bit.

TRAMP. Nine years, come July, since I found you gone.

WOMAN. [*Sullenly*] That's right.

TRAMP. Bit of a shock at the time.

WOMAN. Waitin' like that—'twasn't a life.

TRAMP. And 'ow d'you like life now you got it?

WOMAN. Well, there it is. How are *you* keepin', Jack?

TRAMP. [*Laughs*] Oh! I'm the King of Egypt.

WOMAN. You look it. What d'you do with yourself?

TRAMP. On the road.

WOMAN. Any fat in that?

Tramp. I'm not 'Enry Ford. How d'you come to be in these parts ?

Woman. Chasin' round after the races. That's my best stunt, now.

Tramp. [*Staring at her*] Upset me yesterday—seein' you ; it fair did.

Woman. S'pose you think I'm the world's worst ?

Tramp. Don't think nothin'. Gawd's truth ! Give up thinkin' these years past.

Woman. No ; it don't do to think. [*For a moment they both stand motionless, staring before them. With a jerk she laughs*] It's real funny, meetin' you again, Jack. 'Ow's your old mother ?

Tramp. Dead.

Woman. I often think o' Tooting. That was a good little time we had together.

Tramp. Ah !

Woman. That crimson war did *us* in.

Tramp. That's a fact. [*Staring at her*] *You* don't look too bright, Milly.

Woman. Oh ! I'm a treat. I say, Jack, where's the barman ?—drop o' gin'd do me proud. [*She looks longingly at the bottles.*]

Tramp. 'Elp yourself, then.

Woman. [*With a shudder*] No ; don't want no more nights in there.

Tramp. [*Staring at her again*] Take it all round—is it a life ?

Woman. [*Mastering her lips with an effort*] It's rock bottom.

Tramp. And where's the end to it ?

WOMAN. I say! Solemn! Short life and a merry one. [*She laughs*] What about you, if it comes to that?

TRAMP. "The rabbits 'ave 'oles, an' the fowls of the air 'ave their nests, but the son o' man——" knew me Bible when I was a nipper.

WOMAN. Ah! The son o' man cops it fair—an' the daughter o' man too. That's how I see it.

TRAMP. 'Usband an' wife!

WOMAN. Well, I always 'ad a liking for you, Jack.

TRAMP. And showed it proper, eh?

WOMAN. My nature's bad, I suppose. [*She laughs.*]

TRAMP. Well, you've struck it rocky, comin' 'ere, not a bob in the village.

WOMAN. Why—what's up?

TRAMP. Pits closed—everybody on their uppers.

WOMAN. I say, Jack, what did that loony, soft-voiced chap pay my fine for?

TRAMP. *I* sent 'im with the money.

WOMAN. You?

TRAMP. Got it off the old blister that quodded us.

WOMAN. You got it off the beak? Never!

TRAMP. Long story, that.

WOMAN. Got any more rhino, Jack?

TRAMP. Not a bean.

WOMAN. I've the price of two drinks, and when that blighted barman comes back, we'll have 'em. Oh! here 'e is!

The BARMAN *has come in from the commercial room. He looks at the* WOMAN *askance.*

WOMAN. Two double gins, please.

BARMAN. We don't serve drinks to women.

WOMAN. Oh! You don't. Why? 'Aven't we got the vote?

BARMAN. Never you mind: and we don't serve 'em to tramps. So if you've quite done, perhaps you'll both go down the road. The "Red Lion's" the other side.

WOMAN. My Gawd! If you——

TRAMP. 'Ere, Milly! Let me—Look 'ere, this lady is my wife.

BARMAN. I don't give a darn if she's your grandmother; you've got to go down the road. So go on, and go quiet!

TRAMP. 'Aven't we got trouble enough without your lip? If you weren't in the trenches there, I'd knock your 'ead off.

BARMAN. [*Stolidly*] If you don't go, I'll come over the top and shift you.

WOMAN. Let 'im be, Jack. I got no kick in me this mornin'. [*She coughs.*]

TRAMP *stands looking at her.*

TRAMP. [*Suddenly throwing his hands up to his head*] Gawd! And this is a world!

He has not seen MR EAST, *who has come in from the hall.*

MR EAST. George, will you very kindly make me two nice hot drinks with gin and cloves.

BARMAN. [*After hesitation*] It's your responsibility, Mr East.

He begins to prepare the drinks, and then goes out for hot water.

MR EAST. I hope you have had a pleasant talk?

TRAMP. Well! We was tryin' to decide which of us was too good for the other.

MR EAST. And which is the superior?

TRAMP. Heu! She's got the price o' two drinks, an' I've got the price o' none.

MR EAST. [*Looking from one to the other*] I only paid five of that ten pounds for the fine. If I might divide the other five between you, and possibly you would not mind my adding five of my own.

They say nothing, but they seem suddenly to have become all eyes.

[*To the* WOMAN] Would you take these, then? [*He holds out to her five notes.*]

WOMAN. I ask your pardon. [*She takes the notes.*]

MR EAST. Why?

WOMAN. Takin' you for a missionary.

MR EAST. Yes, that was too good to be true. [*Turning to the* TRAMP *and handing him five notes*] And perhaps you would take these before he comes back. I have to take care of my reputation. They might call me looney.

The TRAMP *takes them in silence.*

Will you shake hands?

First the TRAMP *and then the* WOMAN *having stealthily wiped a hand, shake* MR EAST'S.

The BARMAN *re-enters with the kettle and pours into the two glasses.*

BARMAN. [*Handing the drinks*] 'Ere you are, Mr East. Gin and bitters for you?

MR EAST. [*Taking the two hot drinks and handing*

one to each] It will serve, George. [*He watches the outcasts with a smile: then, takes up the gun and leaves*] May I be permitted to drink your healths? [*He raises the glass.*]

The OUTCASTS *also raise their glasses and the three drink.*

TRAMP. [*Putting his glass down*] Well, I'll be gettin' on.

WOMAN. [*Putting her glass down*] Can I come with you a bit, Jack?

TRAMP. Shouldn't be surprised. So long, Mister. You've played the good Samaritan, you 'ave.

MR EAST. Not at all.

WOMAN. Well, you *'ave*. I don't say much, but I feel it. [*Almost in spite of herself she touches her heart.*]

TRAMP. So do I, Mister. So long! Good luck!

MR EAST. And to you both.

The TWO *move to the French window in single file, hesitate there a moment, look back at* MR EAST, *say nothing, and go out.* MR EAST *stands quite still.*

BARMAN. Mr East, is it true you're goin' to Africa with Sir Charles?

MR EAST. Yes, George. Lions will be very restful.

BARMAN. You'll be missed 'ere.

MR EAST. Thank you. But with so many poor people having nothing to look forward to, it seems almost the first duty of the Englishman to leave England.

BARMAN. Things do look a bit blue. The liquor

trade's declinin'. You don't think the old country's goin' to peg out, do you, Mr East?

MR EAST. No, George, far from it! England is very tough; but she is rather like a pint pot with a quart of beer trying to remain in it.

BARMAN. Overflowin', ah! When are you goin'?

MR EAST. Next week, I believe.

BARMAN. Well, if there's anything I can do for you, Mr East —

MR EAST. Nothing; unless perhaps you could do something dangerous to me, so that I could exercise my courage.

BARMAN. I could give you another drink.

MR EAST. That would be capital, if I may say so.

On the BARMAN's *beginning to mix the drink, and* MR EAST *smiling and rubbing his hands,* SIR CHARLES *enters.*

BARMAN. [*Bringing drink to* MR EAST] Anything for you, Sir Charles?

SIR CHARLES. No, thank you, George.

The BARMAN, *with some glasses, goes out into the commercial room.*

Well, Mr East, Africa's not smiling on me a little bit. The old country's in my very bones.

MR EAST. [*Looking out of the window*] She is very beautiful this morning.

SIR CHARLES. [*Gazing out of the window*] Horses and dogs, voices, fields, look of the sky. Damn!

MR EAST. Sir Charles, I am afraid that, contrary to my interests, I ought to tell you something.

SIR CHARLES. Oh! What's that?

MR EAST. Miss Mazer has a crush on you, if I may so express it.

SIR CHARLES. [*With a wry smile.*] Yes. That's put the lid on. I prefer bodily exile to spiritual. When can you start, Mr East?

MR EAST. I fear that I shall require to arrange for my dog, and buy an extra tooth-brush. After that at any moment.

SIR CHARLES. Shall we go up to-morrow and buy tooth-brushes together? There's a British-India for Mombasa to-day week.

MR EAST. I am wildly excited, Sir Charles.

SIR CHARLES. Never travelled?

MR EAST. Once—to Boulogne.

SIR CHARLES. That hardly makes you a master of the art.

MR EAST. So I found when I volunteered for the South Pole.

SIR CHARLES. Shake hands, Mr East, you're the salt of England. [*They shake, and* SIR CHARLES *turns up to the smoking-room.*]

MR EAST. [*Shaking his head.*] Only Cerebos, I fear. [*He goes towards the hall door.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE II

Ten hours have passed: it is night. One light only burns below the dying fire.

SIR CHARLES, *in dinner-jacket, is sitting in the armchair above the hearth, a pipe in his mouth, a glass by his side, a novel on his knee which he is not reading. The garden is misty and moonlit. The* BARMAN *enters the bar and takes some glasses into the smoking-room, through the opened door of which voices are heard.*

VOICE OF COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER. Well, I got my money. Did you back it, Job?

V. OF BARMAN. Ask Mr Bender. You 'ad a bad race, Mr Bender. There was a lot of money on Evolution.

V. OF BENDER. Ah! That old blister 'as the luck o' the world.

V. OF C. TRAV. All the money goes to those 'oo've got it. That's the first law of yuman nature. Cruel 'ard on this Sir Charles, I call it.

The voices drop.

SIR CHARLES *rises, and goes across to the window, where he stands looking out into the moonlit mist. The* INNKEEPER *puts his face in at the door, and seeing what seems to be an empty room, speaks aloud.*

V. OF INNKEEPER. Can't bear to see it! A Sport like Sir Charles drove out o' the country.

V. OF BENDER. 'E won't be the last.

V. OF BARMAN. Little Mr East was saying to me—— [*Voice dies down, and what he was saying is lost.*]

SIR CHARLES *throws the window open—the hoot of an owl is heard.*

V. OF C. TRAV. [*Lofty out*] Africa! Black men and mus-peeters; and not a drink to the square mile, I'm told.

V. OF INNKEEPER. And to think he'd have won enough to set him up on the land of his fathers, even if it don't pay.

SIR CHARLES *gives himself a shake and puts his pipe into his mouth. The sound of* MEN'S VOICES *singing in chorus floats in across the garden—the words being those of "Shenandoah."*

V. OF C. TRAV. Bit of a beano at the "Red Lion."

V. OF BENDER. They're spendin' Mazer's money before they get it—just as well; 'e'll cook 'is balance sheet all right.

V. OF C. TRAV. It's the miners I'm sorry for; they're a lot more wonky than Sir Charles, or you, Mr Bender.

V. OF BARMAN. That's right: there's no place for 'em any more.

V. OF C. TRAV. George, you'll be losin' your job next. Terrible the sobriety there is abaht. It's

lucky we English in'erited the earth, there yn't much else left for some of us, bar taxes—eh, Mr 'Addon ?

V. OF INNKEEPER. There's English blood and bone. If the old country'd put her back into it, the whole trouble would mop up like one of these ground mists. That's my opinion.

V. OF C. Why can't these politicians drop their Parties an' put their 'eads together. We want a national policy, same as in the war.

The sound of a dog howling, very far away, drifts in. SIR CHARLES *leans back against the sill, crossing his arms on his chest.*

I 'ate to 'ear a dog 'owl; that's what they call the banshee in Ireland.

V. OF INNKEEPER. [*Sourly*] We're not in Ireland. We're in England, and thank God for it.

V. OF C. TRAV. Ah! We're in England, good old England; and ain't she gettin' old ?

V. OF INNKEEPER. Not she ? She's a two-year-old.

V. OF C. TRAV. [*With vulgar jocularity*] And we love 'er; and we love 'er!

SIR CHARLES. [*To himself*] Love her! That *is* the little trouble. *And* the cure!

As if in answer, comes the hoot of the owl. The CHORUS OF MINERS' VOICES *rises; they are singing "John Brown's body," and the tramp of their feet is heard as they march down the street away from the "Red Lion."*

SIR CHARLES. [*Softly*] But *her* soul goes marching on!

Far in the distance the MINERS *break into "Tipperary."*

The CURTAIN *falls*

KV-187-614